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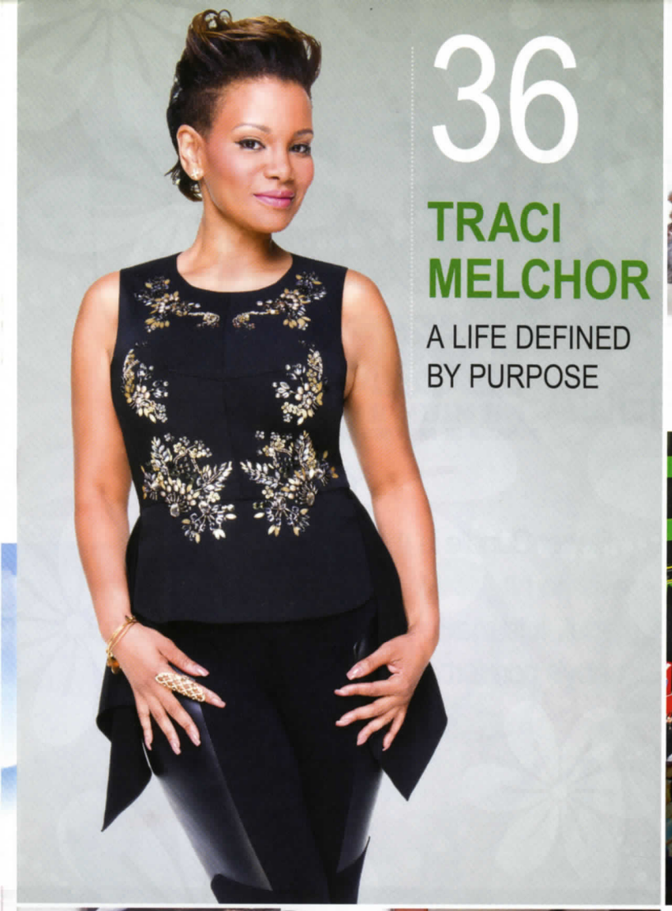

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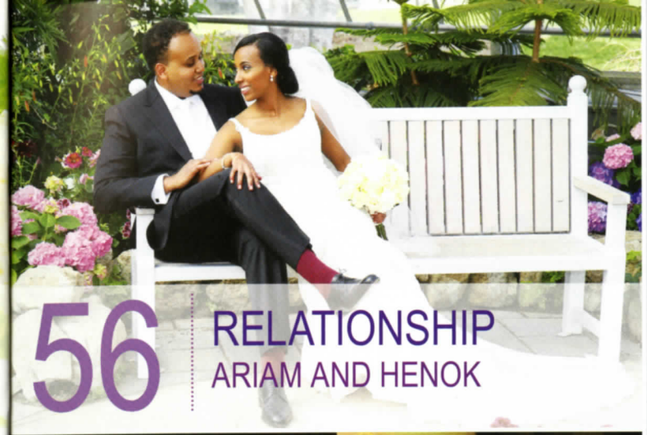

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# *Spring* INTO YOUR PURPOSE

Spring is here and as the weather increasingly warms up, it is great to present a new issue of Planet Africa Magazine with stories that warm up hearts and minds. I would like to thank our readers, subscribers, contributors and advertisers. The support you provide is the fuel that keeps our candle burning, coupled with the everlasting love and grace of God.

With the aim of ensuring harmony and prosperity of people of African descent, as well as communities where they live, we will continue to advance the best of Africa and the Diaspora. In this issue, we share the story of TV personality Traci Melchor. Her uncanny ability to succeed despite challenges is inspiring to Canadians. We dig deeper into her storied beginnings and share her passion and sense of purpose.

We are also pleased to feature Toronto Lawyer Johnson Bababola, Founder and Principal Attorney at JB Law. His thorough knowledge of the law and attention to detail continue to be the bedrock of his celebrated success in the legal arena. We spotlight award-winning African American actress Viola Davis, who, with a lot of confidence, is setting new standards in Hollywood.

Equally, we are delighted by the opportunity to share the inspiring story of the late African Canadian Legend Lincoln Alexander, whose humility, determination and service led to proclamation of January 21st of every year, Lincoln Alexander Day across Canada. We showcase high achievers in our "A-List", people who have demonstrated excellence in various fields, from banking to entertainment.

Planet Africa shares the union of Ariam and Henok Ghebrezghi as well as stunning outfits and gorgeous head wraps from Beni Boo and Donus Hands. We are also pleased to showcase spectacular photographs from the 11th Annual Planet Africa Awards gala, where individuals, businesses and organizations that make a profound difference in the lives of African people worldwide were recognized.

We have the 50th Anniversary of the Selma March, the RBC Black History Essay Competition, the 2015 PanAm Games, finance, entrepreneurship, food, health, beauty, books, fitness, inspiration and agents of change such as author Colleen Blake-Miller as well as Bishop (Dr.) Audley James. We value your time and hope you will enjoy reading the magazine cover to cover, so you can spring into your purpose.

God bless Africa and the Diaspora.

*Moses A. Mawa*
Chairman & Publisher

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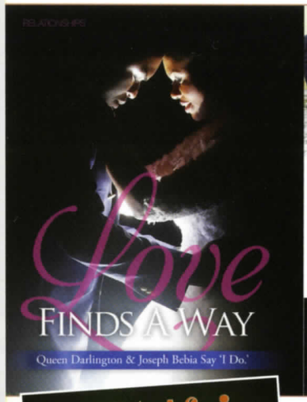
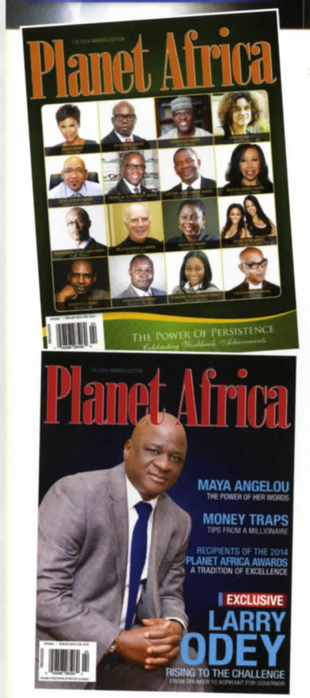
# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR






We love hearing from you. Let us know your thoughts about the articles in Planet Africa Magazine.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
To be considered for publication, letters to the editor must bear the name and address of the writer. We reserve the right to edit for clarity. For details please visit www.PlanetAfricaGroup.com

### PLANET AFRICA AWARDS RECIPIENTS

I am amazed by the caliber of recipients that you honour each year. It is nice to see that you always recognize people who are deserving in the community. People such as Lanre Tunji-Ajayi, Rosemary Sadlier and Yomi Pratt should indeed be celebrated. I am big on volunteerism and I have trained my two teenage sons to do the same.
Jennifer Carter, Toronto Ontario

I was hoping to see at least one Nollywood star among your recipients. I was at the event when Majid Michel and Zack Orji were honoured. The industry is so big now and should not be ignored.
Jane Oyelade-Smith, Toronto, Ontario

### HON. LARRY ODEY

I was inspired when I read the cover story on The Honourable Larry Odey, who was the son of a humble man and rose to become the number three man in Cross River State. This shows that not even your background can limit you. I can relate to his story, Nigeria. I wish him the best as I know politics can often be rough.
Janet Udoh, Hamilton, Ontario

### KERRY WASHINGTON

She keeps me glued to my TV every week watching Scandal. I hope you plan to bring her to Toronto. She is brilliant. I love her elegance and calm leadership. I think she deserves a cover. Thanks for featuring her. Love, love, love her!
Merci Kamba, Montreal, Quebec

### 10 MOST COMMON MONEY TRAPS

This article was very useful to me. I just wanted to write to say thanks. I am trying to avoid some of the pitfalls and just small changes have made a big difference in my finances. No more acquiring to impress.
Felix Ibiang, Lagos, Nigeria

### WORDS OF WISDOM FROM MAYA ANGELOU

Maya Angelou is a legend. She will continue to inspire. She should have received a Nobel Prize. I am just reading "And Still I Rise." I wish everyone could read this book. When I saw the feature in Planet Africa Magazine, I was astonished. God must be trying to teach me something!
Lola Adeleke, Brampton, Ontario


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# CONTRIBUTORS

**Nicole Abbaticchio**

Journalist & TV Reporter

Nicole Abbaticchio is a writer and an emerging television host. She received an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree in Professional Writing and Communications from York University. At the time, she was a professional dancer with the Toronto Raptors and the Toronto Argonauts, where she appeared in television interviews, performances and commercials. Abbaticchio desires to inspire young people with her work in the media and in the community. She is an Associate Coordinator for Silvertrust Media events, and reports for the Planet Africa television show. Abbaticchio writes about the Toronto 2015 Pan Am Games.

**Linda Akinyemi**

Writer & Editor

Whether it is writing a 3,000 word feature, or just an off-the-wall piece, Linda Akinyemi has proven herself as a reliable, talented and versatile writer. As Managing Editor at Silvertrust Media, she has interviewed many celebrities, as well as covered a wide array of topics ranging from politics to entertainment trends. Her work has appeared in many publications including TW, Diversity and Destiny magazines. A graduate of Laurentian University, Akinyemi is a member of the Canadian Association of Journalists. In this issue, she writes about Toronto Lawyer Johnson Babalola.

**Cathy Morenzie**

Fitness Expert & Personal Trainer

Cathy Morenzie, a noted personal trainer, author, blogger and presenter, has been a leader in the health and wellness industry for nearly 30 years. Her impact has influenced thousands of people over the years to help them lose weight and develop positive attitudes about their bodies and about fitness. She works with clients to make fitness an integral part of a healthy lifestyle by emphasizing balance, discipline and moderation. Morenzie is considered an expert in the areas of weight management and designing creative workouts. She shares five habits that will improve your health dramatically.

**Dorcas Agyekum**

Journalism Student

A Journalism student at Seneca College, Dorcas Agyekum has a strong passion for being a part of an information sharing community. She became fascinated with storytelling after reading the book series "Magic Tree House" at a young age. It was then, that she began to read numerous books. Growing up, Agyekum was always involved in media and writing-related projects, which helped shape her unique ideas. In the future, she hopes to utilize her interests to create dynamic stories in print and the newsroom. She aspires to become a journalist and a Christian writer after graduation.

**Dammie Ojelade**

Host & Associate Producer

Moving from Nigeria to Toronto, Canada gave Dammie Ojelade a bird's-eye view of entertainment and fashion. She is most known for being a glamour model in the city's entertainment scene. Besides acting, Ojelade is very active in the community. She founded the United Sisters Lioness Club, a social support group for women of all races and professions that unites and provides a loving and non-judgmental environment for women to connect. Currently, Ojelade is the Host and Associate Producer of Business Profile, an upcoming segment on Planet Africa Television. She reviews 'The Book of Negroes' mini-series in this issue.

**Yetunde Taiwo**

Chef & Entrepreneur

A serial Entrepreneur by nature, Yetunde Taiwo created Afropolitan Chef to tap into the power and love of food to bring people together. In her new cookbook Love with Food: African-fusion meals made easy, The Afropolitan Chef shares quick, simple, colourful, flavorful recipes with calorie count. Foodies will learn how to save time cooking African meals directly from Africa's trend setting, culinary ambassador.
Africa has been aptly described as "A world in one continent." Equally so, an African meal can be described as "A world on one plate." Taiwo shares her recipe for Steak with Couscous.

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# VIOLA DAVIS

## THE HOLLYWOOD STAR WHO IS BREAKING NORMS & SETTING NEW STANDARDS

By Linda Akinyemi

Award-winning actress Viola Davis, has risen on the ember of a childhood dream to become one of the world's most respected actresses.

Davis is a talented Hollywood actress. She has starred in big mainstream films such as Doubt and Ender's Game and has been nominated for Oscars for her performances in The Help and Play. Clearly, Davis has redefined what it means to set a standard. Her decision to become an actress arrived by way of Cicely Tyson in the movie "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pitman."

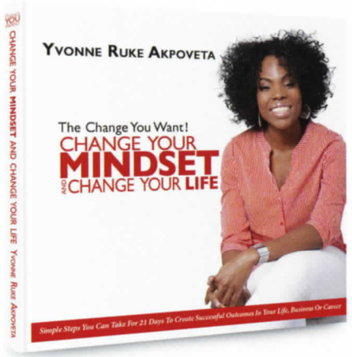
When she saw Tyson on television, she said she saw for the first time an actress who "looked like my mother, who looked like me. She was dark-skinned, full-lipped. I also saw something in her performance that was different from the Black comedy shows on television at the time, like 'Sanford and Son.' I saw craft."

As a child, Davis was raised in Central Falls, Rhode Island, New York. After graduating from college, she eventually won a place at Juilliard School and went on to work in theater, as well as on Broadway. In acting school, students are told to arm themselves with as much information as they can. This is typical of Davis even as talented as she is.

Not only does Davis read her script so many times, she puts together a significant number of pages of her character's biography for research purpose. "You read the script a million times. Because what the script gives you are given circumstances. Given circumstances are all the facts of your character. You line all of the character's facts up and then all the stuff that's not there, you fill in with your imagination or your personal experience," Davis says of her process for gathering information.

For Davis, the joy of being an actor is that the bigger the puzzle, the greater the satisfaction there is in putting it together. "It's so fulfilling and healing to transform into all these characters and entertain people and to get paid for what I do," said Davis. "I had to rely on my imagination, and my dreams, and fail, and get up and persevere."

> I had to rely on my imagination, and my dreams, and fail, and get up and persevere.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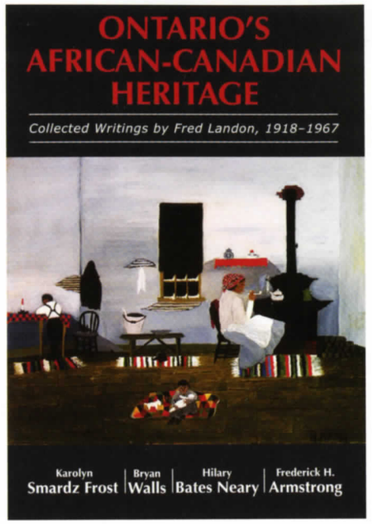
## The Change You Want! Change Your Mindset And Change Your Life

**Yvonne Ruke Akpoveta**

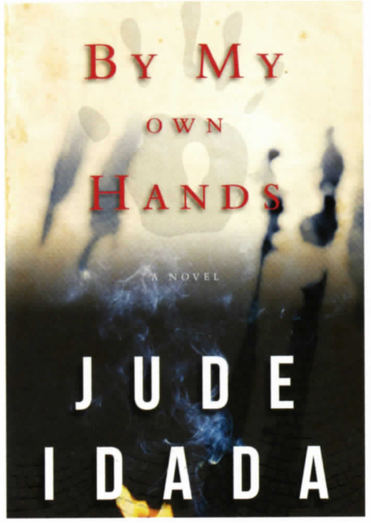
A positive, inspiring and easy to read book, 'The Change You Want! Change Your MINDSET, and Change Your Life' teaches you simple steps you can take immediately to create successful outcomes in your home, business or career. This book provides you with simple, but powerful steps you can take each day to start shaping your mindset and experiencing the success and fulfilment you desire! Our thoughts, beliefs and experiences are the building blocks that shape our mindset, and in turn determine our desired outcomes. Start to positively shape your mindset and you will take the outcomes in your life from good to great – whether in your personal life and relationships or your career or business.




## Ontario's African Canadian Heritage

**Karolyn Smardz Frost , Bryan Walls Hilary Bates Neary Frederick H. Armstrong**

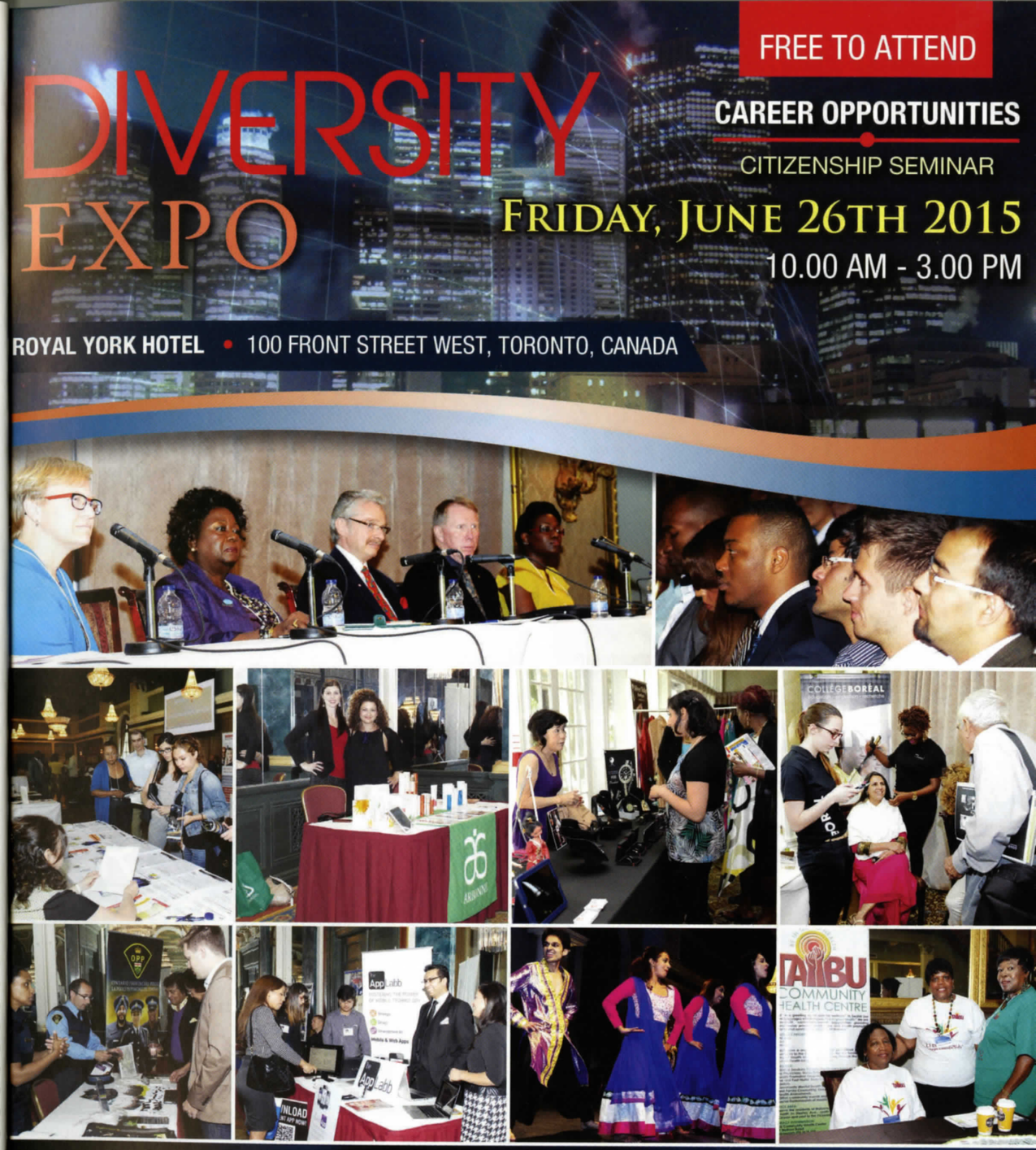
This book is composed of the collected works of Professor Fred Landon, who for more than 60 years wrote about African-Canadian history. The selected articles have, for the most part, never been surpassed by more recent research and offer a wealth of data on slavery, abolition, the Underground Railroad, and more, providing unique insights into the abundance of African-Canadian heritage in Ontario. Though much of Landon's research was published in the Ontario Historical Society's journal, Ontario History, some of the articles reproduced here appeared in such prestigious U.S. publications as the Journal of Negro History. This volume includes research by the editors into the life of Fred Landon. It's an essential book for today's students of local history.




## By My Own Hands

**Jude Idada**

In the cold climes of Toronto there is a suicide and in the hot tropics of Lagos, there is yet another suicide. Both deaths fueled by family betrayal. Therese and Andrew Sciorra are survivors of the first suicide; Osasu and Nosa Eweka are survivors of the second suicide. The lives of these four intertwine in an avalanche of curdling blood, painful secrets, unforgivable sins, unbridled desires and redeeming love. From the sweltering back streets of Lagos to the freezing avenues of Toronto, this riveting trilogy will leave you turning pages till the end. This is a brilliantly conceived and flawlessly executed novel. For many adults Jude Idada is the it author right now.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# STEAK WITH COUSCOUS

By Yetunde Taiwo

## INGREDIENTS

- 8-oz steak
- 1 medium sized tomato
- 3 large sized Portobello mushrooms
- 1/4 small medium size chopped red onions
- 1/4 teaspoon of butter
- ½ a teaspoon of salt (your choice of seasoning
- 1 bouillon cube
- 1 cup of red wine
- 1 cup of couscous
- 1 stick green onion (chopped for garnish)

## INSTRUCTIONS

1 First season steak with bouillon cube, salt and curry and let it marinate for at least 5-7 minutes. The longer it marinates, the juicier it will be.

2 Grease pan with butter lightly and make sure it's hot and then pan sear steak on each side for about 8 minutes or depending on how juicy you want it. Don't worry about it being rare.

You will still be cooking it again for another 3-5 minutes. So let it be tender on the first pan sear. This will be a good time to cook your couscous, quinoa or rice.

3 While steak is searing, cut up the Portobello mushrooms, (long cuts) onions, tomatoes. Take out meat; deglaze the entire flavor with red wine at least 1/4 to half a bottle of red wine. Let it evaporate for about 4-5 minutes and then add diced mushrooms, onions and tomato. Let it cook on low heat for 5 minutes.

4 While wine and vegetables are simmering, slice up your meat (long side) then add to mix. Cook for another 3 minutes (stir and mix) DONE! Served with couscous, quinoa, potatoes or sweet potatoes. Garnish with green onions or cilantro.

Couscous is a traditional Berber dish of semolina, generally served with meat or vegetable stew. Couscous is a staple food throughout North Africa and the Middle East.


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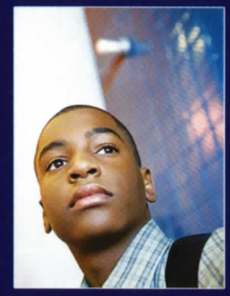

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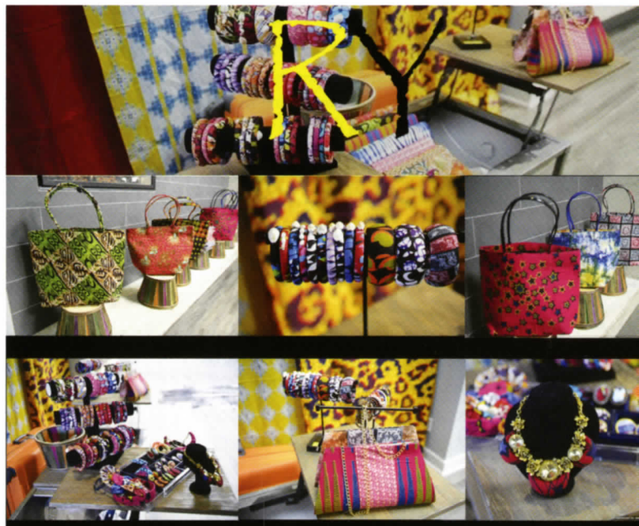

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FEATURE

# THE 5 ESSENTIAL TRAITS FOR **SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURS**

## Award-Winning CEO Shares Tips for Developing Them

Corrine Sandler

A first-quarter survey of start-up entrepreneurs' confidence found 91 percent were "confident" that their companies would become more profitable in the coming 12 months. Nearly half anticipate hiring more employees in that time, according to a poll of nearly 2,000 CEOs by Legal Zoom.

That doesn't surprise Corrine Sandler, CEO of Fresh Intelligence Research Corp., a global business intelligence company ranked on Profit Magazine's list of top 50 fastest-growing companies as well as featured two years in a row on the W100 (top woman entrepreneurs in Canada) list.

"Any natural entrepreneur is bursting with confidence, both in him or herself and in the conditions they control," says Sandler, author of "Wake Up or Die" In fact, she says, confidence is one of the five key traits shared by successful entrepreneurs.

"Entrepreneurs need risk to thrive, so believing in themselves and the people they've put in positions of responsibility is essential," she says. "There's no room for doubt and second-guessing yourself" says Corrine Sandler who shares the following personality traits.

**PASSION:** It can't be developed through leadership training, but everyone has the capacity for it, Sandler says. "It's the source of incredible energy that feeds on one of our most powerful emotions and compels entrepreneurs forward with excitement and enthusiasm."

**A FIGHTER'S INSTINCT:** The best fighters have studied their competition, identified their strengths and weaknesses, and used that knowledge to develop a strategy to beat them. They're determined to give it their all whether they're winning or losing.

When things are going well, the entrepreneur who thinks the fight is over and he has won will quickly find himself knocked to the mat. Equally important is having the mental fortitude to keep fighting when you're at the bottom, bruised and bloodied.

### About Corrine Sandler

Corrine Sandler is the Founder and CEO of Fresh Intelligence Research Corp., a global market research agency; international professional speaker and author of "Wake Up or Die. Corrine has been on Profit's Top 100 Female Entrepreneurs list, two years in a row. With more than 20 years' experience, she has established a reputation for unparalleled consumer understanding and insight development, working with Fortune 500 companies.

**VISION:** Successful entrepreneurs are always thinking ahead – planning the future with imagination and wisdom. Having a vision means being able to manifest original ideas.

Strategic coaches can help you define your vision, if that's not your strength. You can rely on worksheets to crystallize and drive the vision home, such as the BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal) from "Mastering the Rockefeller Habits" by Verne Harnish. What you visualize will materialize.

**REBEL:** Entrepreneurs are agents of change; they predict the future by creating it. You can't be content with maintaining the status quo. Push limits. Use intelligence to quickly and accurately identify – and act on – market trends. Dare to be different!. Now, that's a rebel with a cause. Not everyone was born to be an entrepreneur. Do an honest self-assessment. If you're lacking in one of these traits, address it!"

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# When To Toss Your *MakeUp*

As we usher in spring, it's time to look into your makeup closet and clean up. Many women love their cosmetics, but they are not meant to last forever. The most important thing is to protect your face from skin irritation. Expired makeup can cause skin problems and eye infections. Most cosmetics products do not have an expiration date on them. The responsibility of knowing when to toss the products depends on the consumer. Make a note to yourself, regarding when to get rid of your cosmetics. We are providing you with some industry-suggested life span for your beauty products.

### Mascara

3 to 6 Months

### Liquid Eyeliners

6 Months

### Lipstick

2 Years

### Liquid Foundation

1 Year

### Powders

2 Years

### Eye Shadow

2 Years

### Eye/Lip Liner

2 Years

### Nail Polish

2 Years

### Blush

2 Years

### Concealer

1 Year



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# BENI BOO

## WELL MADE, WELL PRICED & WELL DESERVED

Behind this fashion brand stands a singular designer, Beni Bouka, with an innate sense of style and unfailing eye for timeless chic. Beni Boo Styles, is an exotic and unisex clothing line that hit the rails of Toronto in 2012 with the vision of providing original and unique clothes tailored in various custom sizes for the fashionably hip. The award-winning designer has created a vast variety of affordable and quality clothes with African prints and contemporary looks to make customers look and feel good.

With a modern, exotic African influence, designer Beni Bouka recently opened a new studio in Toronto, as well as unveiled its newest collection that is stylish and flexible enough for all body types and seasons. Beni Boo produces accessories, footwear, men's and women's ready-to- wear, and custom made pieces. Having won several accolades within the fashion industry, Beni Boo has earned the respect and affection of many around the world.

*Beni Boo was a part of a Planet Africa TV special on African fashion.* ■

*Kemi Martins*
Of Donus Hands

## BRINGING ART TO LIFE

# GELE

## Standing Out In Style With Your Head Gear

When you attend an African engagement party, wedding, church service or any special occasion, one thing that stands out is the elaborate, colourful head gears. Using head gears to accentuate one's dressing is widespread in Africa. In Nigeria, it is popularly known as 'gele'. In South Africa, the Afrikaans call it 'doek' which means fabric. In Ghana it is popularly called 'duku'.

Although head gears can be worn for day-to-day activities, the sophisticated ones are for special occasions. For Africans in Toronto, gele is increasingly becoming popular. Kemi Martins of Donus Hands has made it easy for women that love the head gear, as she has distinguished herself as a gele artist. For a reasonable fee, she goes to events to assist individuals with tying the gele. As a beautician, makeup artist and hairstylist, Kemi understands what women want and how to make them look special for their events. This season on Planet Africa Televison, Kemi shows viewers how to create their own geles at home.

## DR. JEFFERSON SACKEY

# COMMITTED TO THE TRUTH

### One Of The world's Most Hard-Working Reporters Talks About Education, Filing From War Zones And Why He Won't Swallow His Passion

By Linda Akinyemi

As a budding International Journalist, Dr. Jefferson Sackey has been a globetrotting reporter for almost ten years, covering armed conflicts, political upheavals and natural disasters in hot spots around the world. He has reported from over fifty countries including Iran, Russia and Sudan in his quest to bring the world to his viewers. He has sat and interviewed global figures such as Prime Minister Tony Blair, Secretary General Kofi Annan and President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Currently a contributor to CNN World View and Correspondent for DWTV, the award-winning journalist is the Midday News Anchor at Joy FM and TV. He also doubles as the network's Senior International Correspondent.

Born in 1978 during a destabilized era in Ghana's political history at Senya Beraku, it was a year that saw an exchange of powers by players of the Supreme Military Council, a military regime that promised to reinstate a civilian government. Though he was too little to witness what was going on at that time, he vividly remembers the repercussion of the economic crisis that ensued. As the situation worsened, a number of Ghanaians sought to travel out of the country in search of greener pastures. Dr. Sackey's father was one of them. "He left for Nigeria, rendering my mother as a single parent, who struggled to see her two kids, my senior brother and I through education," recalls Dr. Sackey. To support his mother, young Sackey sold everything from mosquito repellant to kerosene in an effort to keep their names in the school register.

Throughout those challenging moments, there was always one thing that made him happy as a child – having the opportunity to experience what his peers would only want to wait till they were of age. Growing up, young Sackey would always pick up the dailies and read to his peers as though he knew what he wanted to become. By the age of 9, he had made his first television appearance on a kids program called 'Children's Own' on Ghana's national broadcaster, GBC.

Having graduated at the Ghana Institute of Journalism, Dr. Sackey landed his first job with Television Africa as a primetime newscaster. "I had so much interest in international affairs and so I was usually sent to countries like Sierra Leone to cover political upheavals," says Sackey, who also holds an Honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from Dayspring Christian University in Mississippi. Three years later, he won a scholarship to study at the Deutshe Welle Television Training Institute in Berlin. "I think that was where my full time potential in international journalism was discovered," he recounts.

He had so much interest in human right issues. Dr. Sackey soon realized the need to tell the story of people who are contributing to the change process in their respective communities. His programme 'Jefferson Reports' does just that. "So whether here in Canada or back in a rural community in the Sudan, I search for change-makers who have become instruments of change for their people," says Dr. Sackey, who served as the Public Relations Officer for Ghana's Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2005 to 2007. Even though he understands the increasing dangers Journalists are facing trying to get a story out, he has never allowed fear to swallow his passion to bring about change, just like Martin Luther King or Malala Yousafzai. "That's the perception I have about my profession. The higher the risk of telling a story, the more important it is."

Despite the push-pull of work and family commitments as he is married to Elizabeth Sackey with two kids, Jeff and Jelissa, when asked what he enjoys most about being an international journalist, he says "The fact that I'm able to be the mouthpiece of that disabled young girl who is locked up in a room because of her challenge, brings me joy. The power of entering people's homes every day with my face and voice on television to tell them about people who are contributing to the change process makes me happy. The fact that I can pick up my passport and travel anywhere in the world to hear different people with different stories makes my job pleasant. At the end of the day, we are all fighting for one thing in life: happiness for ourselves and for others."





# What Are THE TOP 5 VEGETABLES?

## 'The Healthy Mom' Reveals Veggies That Should Make Your Table

When picking vegetables, fresh and frozen vegetables are better than canned vegetables, because they have less added salt. I have found in my research that "the vitamin numbers go up when vegetables are cooked, but the anti-cancer compounds go down". I suggest "steaming or roasting on a pan for no more than 7 minutes. This is a good way to keep the anti-cancer compounds and make it more edible." There are five key veggies that top her list as the healthiest. They include:

By Iva Young

**SPINACH**

Popeye was right. Spinach is an excellent source of Vitamin K, Vitamin A, manganese, folate, magnesium, iron, Vitamin C, Vitamin B2, calcium, potassium and Vitamin B6. It's also a good source of fiber, copper, protein, phosphorous, zinc, Vitamin E, omega 3 fatty acids, niacin and anti-oxidants.

**LETTUCE**

*(greenleaf, red leaf, romaine).*
Lettuce is a low calorie fiber food that is a great source of Vitamin A, folic acid, lactucarium (which helps enhance calmness and pain relief), as well as the antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin. Lettuce also contains a good amount of anti-cancer properties.

**BROCCOLI**

Besides having great flavor and texture, Broccoli contains copious amounts of Vitamin A, Vitamin C, beta carotene and Vitamin K. The minerals in broccoli include calcium, potassium, iron and folate. A great source of fiber, broccoli also provides lots of bioflavonoids, which is an antioxidant that helps protect against cancer and heart disease.

**BRUSSELS SPROUTS**

A staple in the diets of Asian cultures, who are among the longest living people in the world, the crunchy garnish contains lots of potassium, Vitamin C, Vitamin A, beta carotene and Vitamin K.

This is another great anti-cancer vegetable

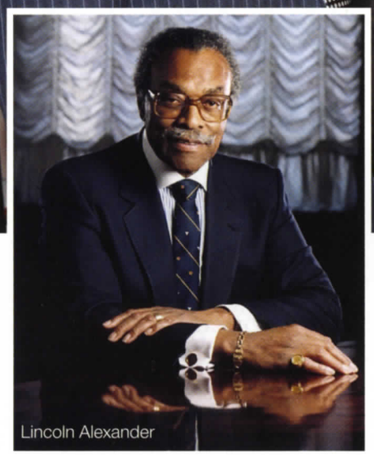
**CABBAGE**

Although best known as the partner of corned beef on St. Patrick's Day, cabbage is a great low calorie food that contains a good amount of fiber, calcium and Vitamin C. Cabbage is incredibly packed with substantial anti-cancer agents.

### About Iva Young

Iva Young was born in Munich, Germany, and her family moved to Toronto, Canada, when she was two years old. Her parents grew up in Croatia, so she grew up eating traditional high-fat Croatian and German meals. That upbringing helped spark her passion for nutrition and natural health. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree with an emphasis in Kinesiology and Health Promotion from California Polytechnic University.

The Hon. Senator Don Meredith, His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, Erika Alexander and Joy Alexander



Lincoln Alexander

# LINCOLN ALEXANDER DAY

## CELEBRATING AN AFRICAN CANADIAN LEGEND

Lincoln Alexander's life was an example of humility, determination and service. He was a man, who, without malice, fought for equal rights for all races in society, changed attitudes and contributed greatly to the inclusiveness and tolerance of Canada. For many, January 21, known as Lincoln Alexander Day, means celebrating his enormous legacy. Recently, Alexander's grand-daughter Erika Alexander and his daughter-in-law Joy Alexander, were on hand as the first official Lincoln Alexander Day across Canada was marked.

Granted Royal Assent from His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada in the Senate Chamber, Alexander himself was once a Queen's representative. He was the first African Canadian to become Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, appointed by Governor General Jeanne Sauvé on the advice of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in 1985.

The Hamilton native was also a Member of Parliament representing Hamilton West as a member of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada for four terms.

After retiring from active politics, Alexander went on to be named to the Order of Canada, served as Chancellor of the University of Guelph longer than any of his predecessors, chaired the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and worked tirelessly in volunteer positions. It is with that spirit of civic engagement, education and diversity, that Senator Don Meredith brought forward his legislation for Lincoln Alexander Day.

"With a firm belief in the virtues of our beloved Canada, coupled with a disciplined work ethic and strength of character, Lincoln Alexander placed the needs of others above his own. He embraced the opportunity of public education and became the master of his own destiny. In so doing, he became a role model for all Canadians and immortalized himself as a symbol of hope," says Senator Meredith. "Alexander inspired each individual in this great nation to become more than the sum of their circumstances. He taught all Canadians that regardless of whatever obstacles may be in the way, within each of us is the strength to rise above in the face of adversity."

Alexander died in his sleep on the morning of October 19, 2012. The national and provincial flags outside the Ontario Legislative Building were flown at half-mast and tributes were given by various viceroys and other leaders. As leader, politician and friend, Alexander had an exemplary life that broke many barriers for minorities and helped alter the face and profile of Canadian politics. His dynamic role in Canada's multiculturalism clearly demonstrates his enduring legacy and importance to Canada and to African Canadians in particular.

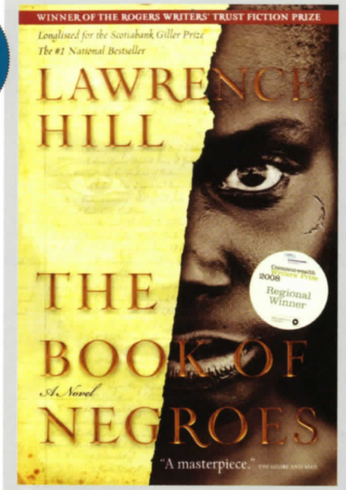


review

# THE BOOK OF NEGROES

## A DARK TALE OF CANADIAN HISTORY

By Dammie Ojelade



Author Lawrence Hill

Aminata Diallo played by Anajanue Ellis

A scene from CBC mini-series

The Book of Negroes was first published in 2007 by Canadian author Lawrence Hill. An instant hit, it was no surprise this moving book was turned into a six-part CBC mini-series that featured some of Hollywood's best actors. It tells the story of Aminata Diallo, the daughter of a midwife and a jeweler, played by Anajanue Ellis. At 11 she was taken to South Carolina from her village in West Africa by American slave traders and forced to walk for days in shackles to the sea with hundreds of fellow captive strangers. We see her struggle to survive her ordeal.

The television series outlines Aminata's traumatic kidnapping, the brutal killings of her family and the long journey on sea where she inspires the other slaves to stay alive despite being kept in the most inhumane conditions and survive this life-altering experience. It also shows their futile attempts to break free of the slave traders and the lives that were ultimately lost in the process. Aminata's story however, is one of hope, love and an instinct to pull through even the most desperate situations. She was determined to be a free woman and return back to her home in Africa.

The collaboration between Director Clement Virgo and Hill is profoundly powerful. The story unfolds as Aminata becomes an adult and suffers a series of painful situations like rape and abuse that are not unusual in the history of slavery. Her strength and courage stood out through her pain.

> CBC and Hill definitely did Canada proud with this amazing collaboration that left us at the edge of our seats.

Eventually in the series, the British offer freedom to slaves who sided with England during the Revolutionary war, the time of the American Revolution. In exchange for helping them, the slaves were given passage into Canada. Aminata was one of those who escaped to Nova Scotia and registered 3,000 Blacks in the published evidence known as The Book of Negroes.

CBC and Hill definitely did Canada proud with this amazing collaboration that left us at the edge of our seats. The book won the 2007 Rogers Writers Trust Prize and in 2008, also won the Commonwealth Writers Prize. It is also no surprise that it was the winning selection for 'Canada Reads' in 2009, with over half a million copies sold in Canada alone. Aired in Canada and the United States during Black History Month, the series brought to light the level of cruelty endured by African people. Hopefully, this historical tale has changed people's perspective on the character of bourgeois democracy since the 18th century.

It is important to note that The Book of Negroes is an actual historical document not a work of fiction. About 20 percent of it is set in Canada. Filmed in both South Africa and Canada, the author quotes, "It is very profoundly a Canadian story, but a very unknown {one} "and if you don't know this, you may have a very limited idea of what constitutes Canadian history."

# THE LIFE MAP

## Helping Individuals and Families Achieve Their Life Goals

By Linda Akinyemi

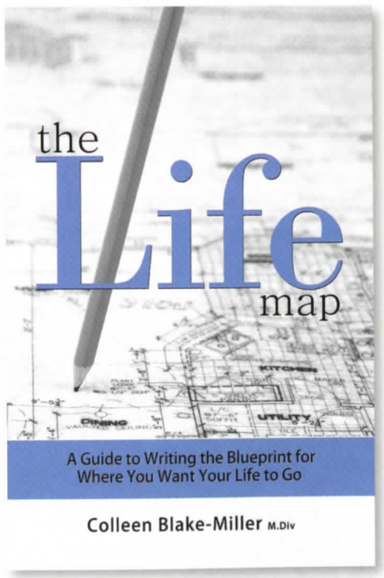
As a young girl, Colleen Blake-Miller was always that friend that people went to, to talk about their issues. She never got tired of listening and talking through problems with them. The Montreal-born knew she had an innate passion for encouraging people she came across with on a daily basis. As Blake-Miller got older, she realized that her faith was as important in helping her understand people, the world she lives in, and a solid understanding of how to help them find hope. In her book, The Life Map, she helps readers tap into their deepest desires and withdraw the rich deposit of purpose that lies within them.

"The Life Map came from my desire to help people achieve their goals in life. My daily work consists of supporting people and helping them find solutions to problems they are facing," says Blake-Miller. The 37-year-old works with clients to develop the 'map' for how they will move from one point to the other. "The book was a natural progression for me as it supports readers in becoming intentional about how they are mapping and living out their lives.

Growing up, life for Blake-Miller, whose parents pastored a local church (and still do), was filled with great childhood memories. As she matured, she began to understand more of the differences between her family and others, and recognized that her family was more focused on outreach, as well as helping those around than focusing on their own comfort. "One of the most influential role models in my life has been my father. He has been the biggest source of support and encouragement throughout my life, and I do hope to walk in the path he has shown me throughout my life," says Blake-Miller.

Often times people are confused on how th ended up in a particular place in their li or even why they continue to do things th lead them away from their desired destinati of wellness. Blake-Miller's role as a therap supports clients as they examine where th are on their journey, recognize how they g there, explore where things went wrong, an discover how to implement changes that will allow them to effect positive and lasting changes in their life. She also works alongside charitable organizations, social service agencies, medical facilities and local churches helping individuals and families. With a private counselling practice in the city of Mississauga, the counsellor and author also holds monthly events such as workshops, conferences and small group studies geared towards women.

Colleen Blake-Miller




A proud mother of 3 young boys, Blake-Mille is expecting her 4th child with her husban Leroy this spring. Although juggling work parenthood, marriage, and life is definitel challenging, she assures that "the main thing i remembering that you cannot do everything so I choose very carefully what to say yes t and do not beat myself up when I have t say no." Her proudest moments have bee meeting each of her children on the day o their births. "Looking at my children daily and seeing all the interesting and humorou things they do makes me feel blessed and ver proud to be their mom."

Asked about her advice to young people especially girls, Blake-Miller encourages ther to seriously commit to discovering thei passion in life. "Everyone has a purpose t fulfil in this life, and the sooner you are able t recognize what that purpose is, the sooner yo will be able to experience fulfillment and a tru sense of contentment. Don't let anything o anyone steal your self-worth. You are uniqu special, and fine just as you are. Stop lookin to the left and right, and focus on what Go thinks about you, and you will be fine."



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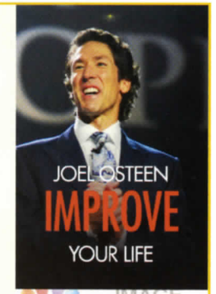

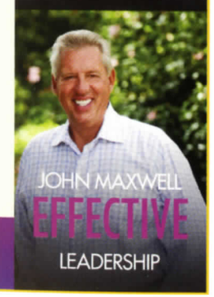


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# 5 Habits That Will Dramatically Improve Your Health

By Cathy Morenzie

For many of us, the thought of getting healthier can seem overwhelming, but here are 5 simple things that you can do to have a dramatic impact on your health.

## 1 Cleanse Daily. Drink Lemon Water

Lemon is a natural cleanser that boosts the immune system, helps digestion and regularity, clears the skin, helps control blood pressure, and detoxifies the liver. Just squeeze the juice of half a lemon (about an ounce) into 12 ounces of water. Best done first thing in the morning.

## 2 Get More Sleep - 7 to 9 hours

Poor sleeping habits have been linked to many health related problems, including increased risk of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, weight gain, and higher levels of corticosterone (a stress hormone), as well as decreased performance, and attention span. As you sleep, your muscles repair themselves; memory is restored; hormones are replenished and your immune system is replenished.

## 3 Cut Down on Your Sugar Intake

Experts now suggest that sugar is the single worst ingredient in the modern diet! You can find it in most soft drinks, fruit drinks, breakfast cereals and even most of our so-called healthy snacks. Aside from the obvious negative effects such as tooth decay, excessive sugar can also overload the liver; cause insulin resistance (a precursor to diabetes); contributes to cancer; is highly addictive and increases your risk for heart disease. Cutting down on your daily sugar intake to less than 10 percent of your total calories can have a significant effect on your health.

### IF YOU HAVE A SWEET TOOTH, TRY SOME OF THE FOLLOWING TIPS

- *Drink more water*
- *Brush your teeth right after meals*
- *Increasing your protein and healthy fats intake will reduce sugar absorption and desire*

## 4 Look for Opportunities to Move

Regular physical activity will reduce feelings of anxiety and depression, strengthen your muscles joints, and bones, decrease your risk of developin high blood pressure, diabetes and heart diseas and contribute to your overall well being. Loo for opportunities in your day to move more; stan up while talking on the phone, walk instead driving whenever possible or dance just for th fun of it. Get creative and think of how you ca add more activity into your day

## 5 Eat Breakfast-

Yes, your momma was right. Breakfast is t most important meal of the day mainly becau it will set the tone for what your body will cra for the rest of the day. A good breakfast will boo brain activity; help control your weight; can low cholesterol levels and will give you the streng and endurance you need to engage in physic activity.

As you can see, getting healthier does not have be a big, overwhelming task. Try one or more these simple tips today.




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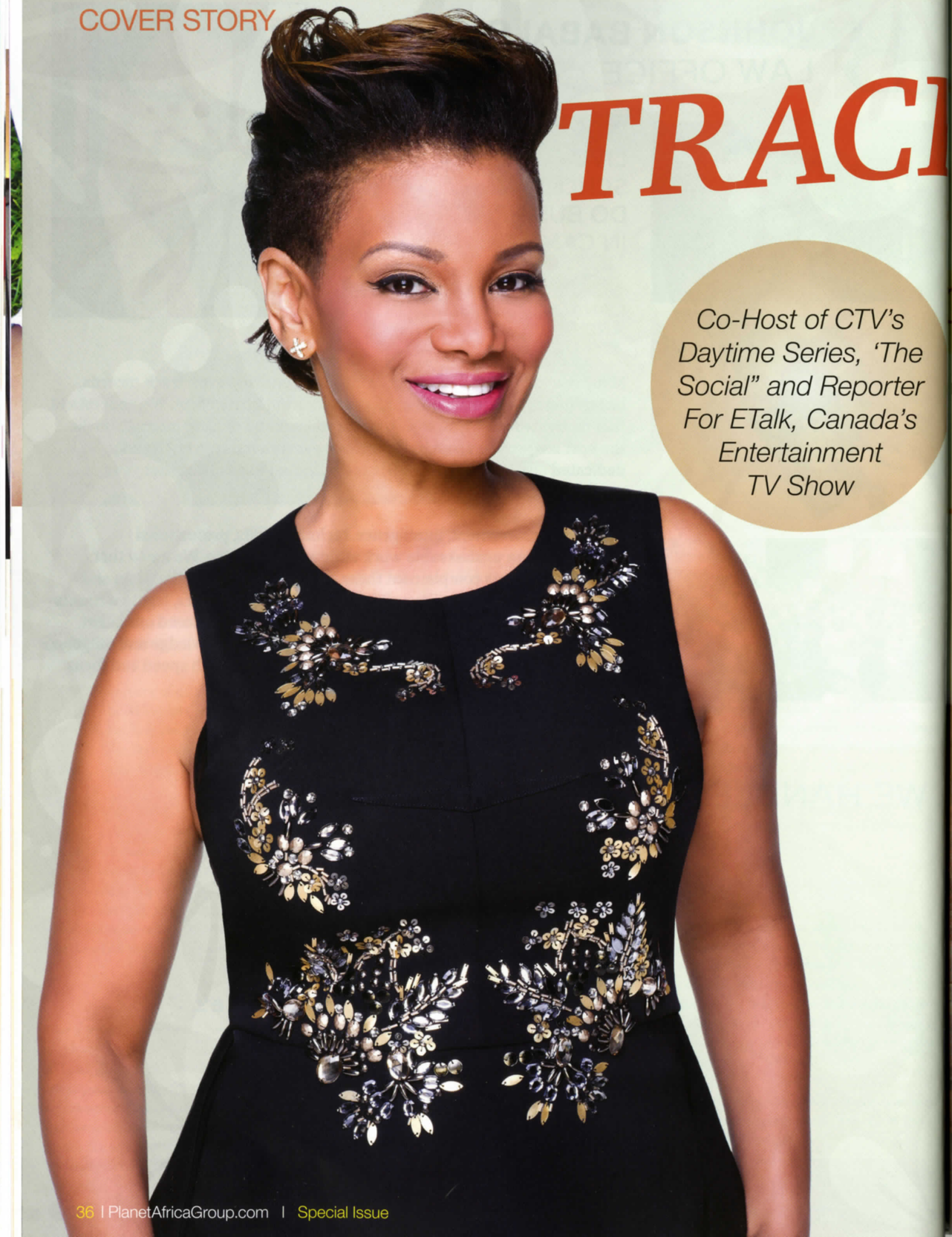


# TRACI MELCHOR

## Connected To Purpose, Driven By Passion

*Co-Host of CTV's Daytime Series, 'The Social" and Reporter For ETalk, Canada's Entertainment TV Show*

By Patricia Bebia Mawa

It is Wednesday on the set of CTV's "The Social," one of Canada's leading talk shows, and the audience, all decked out in their fast-fashion best, are so hyped by the time the four hosts emerge. Soaking in the ovation, blowing kisses and waving enthusiastically is the talented Traci Melchor. Looking radiant in an orange peplum top and fitted skirt, her boisterous and outgoing personality comes alive. The first topic is about a new shoe with a built-in phone docking station for selfies, an April's Fool joke the hosts pulled off so well. As soon as co-host Cynthia Loyst says to Traci, "You are the queen of knowing the best selfie angles," she immediately kicks up her leg to demonstrate how it would work and says, "it feels like I will be taking pictures while getting my yoga stretches at the same time." The crowd bursts in to laughter. The LOL is instantly echoed in social media.

Truth is, Traci is a fun, but conscientious woman. Whether it is adding an honest and interesting perspective to the discussion on The Social, reporting for Canada's #1 entertainment show etalk, or interviewing the likes of Oprah and Beyoncé, the Traci factor shows up all the time. As a child, Traci knew she wanted to work in the media industry after seeing Michael Jackson perform live on stage. Traci wanted to meet the late mega star after the concert and was disappointed to find out that she could not, but she noticed that reporters were allowed to go backstage and interview him. At that moment, Traci made up her mind to become a reporter in the future. She was often seen interviewing her mother at the kitchen table with her cassette recorder.

Traci Melchor @ The Social

Traci Melchor & Dwayne The Rock Johnson (July 2014)

Nick & Knight

"I really thought I was going to be a crim reporter or even a magazine reporter, but was a guidance counselor that kind of guide me to television in high school," she recounts

Even though Traci knew exactly what sh wanted to do in the future, getting a brea in the industry did not come easy. First, sh would have to convince her parents who di not understand what being a reporter meant and how she would make money from doin just that. Traci would also volunteer countles hours at a few TV stations to learn about th industry. "I was a receptionist in the ver building (299 Queen St. West) where I'm on two shows now. I worked as a productio assistant, a floor director and with the camer guys. I wanted to learn every part of th industry. I never got caught up in 'oh I get t be on TV and wear clothes.' I love TV and wanted to learn every aspect of it," she says.

Armed with passion and her love fo entertainment, Traci ended up joining CTV Etalk as an entertainment reporter in 200 She has since covered big events including th Oscars, the Super Bowl, Michael Jackson public memorial service and many histori events. Traci was named by National Post as on of the "Worthy 30" for her contribution to th television industry. She also contributes regularl to CP24 Breakfast, The Marilyn Denis Show CTV News Channel, and 104.5 CHUM FM Toronto.

Prior to working at CTV, Traci worked a host of the popular Rap City on MuchMusic followed by a move to City TV Toronto as a entertainment specialist. From 2000-2005 she was featured in Los Angeles' celebrit scene, guest-starring on hit series CSI an Lizzie McGuire, as well as reporting fro numerous red carpet events as a Hollywoo Correspondent for Star! (Now E! Canada). Sh has interviewed many celebrities, includin Beyoncé, Denzel Washington, Jennifer Lope

One interview that she will cherish forever was with the 'queen of talk', Oprah Winfrey. "Interviewing Oprah was big for me. I trained for it like I was going to the Olympics."

John Travolta, Channing Tatum, and Jamie Foxx, to name a few. One interview that she will cherish forever was with the 'queen of talk', Oprah Winfrey. "Interviewing Oprah was big for me. I trained for it like I was going to the Olympics," Traci shares. She recently travelled to her native St. Lucia to interview The Jacksons and she also flew with Rihanna to seven different countries in seven nights on a chartered jet as part of the singer's "777" tour to promote the album Unapologetic.

A yoga lover, Traci also enjoys spending time with Melissa Grelo, Lainey Lui and Cynthia Loyst, her co-hosts on The Social. "The Social in itself is a gift because I get to work with three incredible women. No matter what kind of day I am having, as soon as I sit in those chairs at 1 PM, I am charged up. I can honestly say that every day is a great day." This does not mean that Traci has not had her fair share of life's troubles.

From emotional turmoil to being diagnosed with a rare form of cancer called Dermatofibrosarcoma Protuberans, Traci remains resilient. "When I broke up with my first love, I came in to work and still had to answer the phones. Even though I left my husband under difficult circumstances, when my babies were five months, I still had to come on-air and smile for the camera." For Traci, being able to come to work and still give her best is what "separates the girls from the women."

Apart from her 75 year-old mother, Traci has also been inspired by journalist Marci Ien, singer Beyoncé and former broadcaster and motivational speaker, Karlene Nation. One person she credits on the job as a great role model and mentor is Marilyn Denis, host of CTV's The Marilyn Denis Show. "I always look to somebody like Marilyn Denis as an example of a class act, because whether I was answering phones as a receptionist or now as a host on The Social, she treats me the exact same way – with respect. And this is a woman who has had a number one show on radio and TV all across Canada, but still has time for other people that she works with," says Traci about Denis. Appreciative of all the opportunities she has been given, Traci supports many charities and community initiatives including The Terry Fox Walk, The Hospital for Sick Kids, The Stephen Lewis Foundation, and The Sickle Cell Awareness Group of Ontario. "Charity begins at home, my mother always says. She is an active volunteer, so I come by it honestly."

Having achieved so much in her career, Traci credits her work ethic and passion as the reasons she is successful today. She advises young people to do their research, be on top of their game and to be dedicated. "You have to understand what's going on. So before I even go to work, I've got my information processed. The cute hair and dress on TV is only 10% of the job. It's a lot of preparation and hard work. I give everything I do 110%." With such a level of commitment, Traci is set to be a major part of the media industry for a long, long time.

As The Social comes to an end for the day, I watch Traci meet and greet the collection of fans who flocked the studio in downtown Toronto. As she smiles and takes selfies with them, I remember the story of the little girl who made up her mind at the Michael Jackson concert decades ago to become a reporter and stay at the center of the entertainment scene. I applaud her strength, perseverance and passion. As she stays connected to her purpose, driven by passion, the world will have no choice, but to keep cheering her on.

Jamie Foxx & Traci Melchor

Traci Melchor & Rihanna

Traci Melchor and Laverne Cox from OITNB

## Juliet Creary

### Founder & CEO
### My Sisters, Our Stories

Juliet Creary wants to empower as many women as possible to reach their full potential. As Founder and CEO of My Sisters Our Stories, an organization that offers a platform for women to share their stories of triumph despite adversities, Creary perfectly understands the challenges of living life without a purpose. "Initially, I had difficulties identifying my true calling and this lead to a lot of indecisiveness and time wasting," says Creary. "I really had to learn to be still and listen to the still small voice inside me; the answer became clear." Once Creary found her purpose, she then had to get the courage to step into her destiny. For her, getting the courage to move forward meant moving out of the way and putting her sisters' needs first.

Since arriving in Canada from Jamaica at the age of 10, Creary has made it her mission to help others in every way possible. She worked as a Registered Nurse after graduating from College and continued in the field for several years specializing in long term care facility. Within the community, Creary has been involved with organizations in the Greater Toronto Area including Costi and Seneca College. "After an individual had been through a program to enter the work force, I go in and prepare them for the job interview." Creary continues to work with many women's groups.

Seeing a woman live her best life in a way that is authentic keeps Creary going. She is also inspired by the work of women such as Maya Angelou. However, she credits her mother as her biggest role model for her supportive nature, strength and skills. On the home front, the married mother of three is also a grandmother. Creary plans to continue living a purposeful life, one that empowers women. "Through the platform of My Sisters Our Stories, I will be able to empower as many women as possible by their stories. I look forward to carrying the movement of sisters sharing their stories around the world."

## Emmanuel Kabongo

### Actor, Producer & Director

Years ago, Congo-born Emmanuel Kabongo gave up a basketb scholarship to pursue his acting career. Now, he has turned his passi into a platform and brand from which he has launched himself as internationally recognized and award-winning actor. Raised in Sou Africa, Kabongo and his family arrived in Canada in the late 90s. studied with acting coach Earl Nanhu at EVN Studios and complet the Theatre Arts program at George Brown College in Toronto.

He began his acting career in short and independent films and has sin made guest appearances on TV shows such as Flashpoint", "Nikita" a 'Breakout". After signing with a popular talent agency, Kabongo ma appearances on a few more television shows such as "Rookie Blu "Murdoch Mysteries" and "Call Me Fitz". His big screen debut ca when he landed two feature films in 2013, the critically acclaimed fi "The Animal Project" by Ingrid Veninger and Paul W.S. Anderso "Pompeii" starring Kit Harington. Kabongo was also a lead actor in t award-winning web series "Teenagers," which also earned him his fi producer credit. He is also represented in the United States by Ma Hamou of Thruline Entertainment.

In 2014, Kabongo was a recipient of the Brian Linehan Charita Foundation scholarship where he was selected as one of the t emerging Canadian talents to attend the Actors Conservatory Progra at the Canadian Film Centre (CFC). Kabongo is the first Congol Canadian to be honored with this award. He was also the fi CFC resident and the first actor from the Brian Linehan Charita Foundation, selected to present at the 2015 Canadian Screen Awar Upon completing the actors program at the CFC, Kabongo landed supporting role in the feature film "Antibirth" starring Chloe Sevig and Natasha Lyonne. During his spare time, Kabongo works w children ages 6-12, something that he has been doing for over 10 yea He continues to play basketball and every summer, he plays in a soc league.

## Mark Beckles

### Head, RBC Insurance Advice Centre, RBC Insurance

With over 25 years of experience in financial services, Mark Beckles has executive leadership experience in banking, insurance, risk management and non-profit leadership. Currently, he has national responsibility for leading over 500 licensed insurance advisors who provide insurance solutions to 750,000 RBC Insurance clients across Canada. Previously, Beckles served as Regional Vice President, Retail Banking at RBC, with market responsibility for North Mississauga. At RBC, he serves as the Executive Champion for Black Cultural Markets.

Between 2002 and 2007, Beckles served as President & CEO of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund. He is actively engaged in the community and has volunteered on many boards. He currently serves on the board of Harbourfront Centre, and is an Advisory Board member of several organizations including the Canadian Multicultural LEAD Organization. In 2011, Beckles received the City of Toronto Bob Marley Award for his commitment to Diversity and City Building. In 2012, he was recognized with the Black Business and Professional Association (BBPA) Distinguished Men of Honor Award. He was also recognized for his work in support of the Canadian Sickle Cell Network.

In 2012, Beckles also received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal for his community volunteerism. Three years later, he received the Harry Jerome Award for Professional Excellence. Beckles holds an MBA in International Business from the University of Bradford and has completed executive programs with Richard Ivey School of Business. Presently, he is completing the Institute of Corporate Directors designation (ICD.D) at Rotman School Of Business, Toronto. Beckles is happily married with three children. He enjoys reading, jazz and football.

## Shola Alabi

### Manager, Scarborough Centre For Healthy Communities

A dedicated activist, Shola Alabi was born in Lagos, Nigeria where she grew up with a strong work ethic and passion for God. Having graduated from Providence College in the United States with a degree in Business Administration, she migrated to Toronto, Canada to pursue a life that was more service oriented. Alabi co-founded Jodal Health Care Inc., a company that caters to the care of the elderly and other marginalized members of the community. There, she served as the Administrative Chair for four years. In 2003, her experiences in program development, skill teaching, as well as crisis management and behaviour modification technique was instrumental in the decision to open a residential home for youth with emotional and behavioural challenge.

In 2006, Alabi received her postgraduate certificate in Psychosocial Rehabilitation in Mental Health at Humber College of Applied Technology's Honors Program. In her continued quest for knowledge, she returned to school in 2010 in order to enhance her counselling skills by pursuing a Master's Degree program in Social Work at the University of Windsor. Shortly after, she took up a position as the Community Engagement/Hub Manager for Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities – the Mid-Scarborough Hub; the first of eight United Way of Toronto's community Hubs planned for the thirteen identified priority neighborhoods by the city of Toronto. Under her leadership, the Hub has become a nucleus of activity and improved access to essential social services thereby responding to some of the needs of the residence of Eglinton East and Kennedy Park community.

A mother of four, Alabi is also the Executive Director of Africa Missions Canada (AMCA), a member of Africa Missions Global with the vision to "Reach, Restore and Rebuild" communities in African Nations. She performs her philanthropy and community-work with a strong faith in God and is driven by her need to enhance social welfare in the poorest of communities. Her passion is to empower people of all race and gender, as well as help bridge the gap of inequality through skill teaching and capacity building.

# THE 11th Annual Planet Africa AWARDS

## A TREMENDOUS SUCCESS!

**Nneka Bowen**
Vice President, Royal Bank
Volunteer, Event Team

The theme of the gala was 'The Power of Persistence', reflecting the resilience and the tenacity of recipients, as well as other inspiring historic achievers of the past.

Recipients & guests came from Africa, the Caribbean, the United Kingdom, the United States and other parts of the world.

The 2014 Planet Africa Awards, a glittering red carpet affair held at the Grand Vict Convention Centre in Toronto, Canada, on November 8th, 2014, was a tremer success. The theme of the event was 'The Power of Persistence', reflecting the resil and tenacity of the recipients, as well as other inspiring historic achievers in the Recipients and guests came from Africa, the Caribbean, the United Kingdom, the U States and other parts of the world.

VIPs in attendance included His Worship Frank Scarpitti; Mayor of the City of Mark Eric Jolliffe, York Regional Police Chief; Senator Don Meredith, Jennifer Evans, Peel Reg Police Chief; Honourable Jean Augustine, Ontario Fairness Commissioner; Nyameko Consul General of South Africa; George Ramocan, Consul General of Jamaica; Honou Brad Butt, Member of Parliament; Honourable Kyle Seeback, Member of Parlia Honourable Mitzie Hunter, Associate Minister of Finance and many others.

The Planet Africa Media Award was presented to Marci Ien, Co-Host, Canada AM on Nelson Mandela Humanitarian Award to Dr. Don Kilby, Founder, Canada Africa Comm Health Alliance. John Momoh, Chairman & CEO of Channels Television in Africa rec the Leadership Award. The Enterprise Award went to Wale Tinubu, Group Chief Exec of oil and gas giant Oando PLC.; the Heritage Award to Frances-Anne Solomon, Filmm Writer, Curator and Producer and the Development Award to Liben Gebremikael, Exec Director, TAIBU Community Health Centre.

The Science and Technology Award was presented to Dr. Victor Obasuyi, Optom Marcus Garvey Memorial Award to Rosemary Sadlier, President, Ontario Black H Society; Lifetime Achievement Award to Bishop Canute Blake, Mentor, Visiona Humanitarian and Frank Walwyn, Lawyer & Partner, WeirFoulds LLP, receive Professional Excellence Award. Lanre Tunji Ajayi, President, Sickle Cell Disease Assoc of Canada (SCDAC) received the Visionary Award; the Volunteer Award went to M Pratt, President, Global Community Alliance and the Renaissance Award to Dw Morgan, Poet, Spoken Word Artist & Motivational Speaker.

The Rising Star Award went to Vanessa Morgan and Celina Mziray for achievemer fashion, music, acting and Amazing Race Canada and the Entertainment Award w Eddie Bullen, Pianist, Songwriter, Arranger and Producer. The Academic Achieve Award was presented to Yemisi Ogunjimi, High Achiever, Accountant and Singer Master of Ceremonies was television personality and dietician Beverly Edwards-H The official red carpet hosts were MC Bonde, Host of the African Groove Show on FM and Karlyn Percil Mercieca, author and motivational speaker.

The Presenting Sponsors of the 2014 Planet Africa Awards were Ethiopian Ai and Sterling Dental. Multidimensional real estate and wealth management com Dreammaker Corporation was the platinum sponsor. Other sponsors, including who enabled youth to attend the gala: Royal Bank of Canada, PwC, Jodal Healthcar Bank, First Fridays, Skylink, Safecare Medical Center, the Transformation Institut Leadership and Innovation, G98.7 FM, FEVA TV, OMNI Television and Diversity Mag

Section of guests at the 11th annual Planet Africa Awards

Abbaticchio of
rust Media & Mark Wong

Senator Don Meredith, Moses A. Mawa
& Mayor Frank Scarpitti of Markham

Fasil Kasa of ET, Karlyn Percil, author & Nigusu
Worku, Country Manager of Ethiopian Airlines (ET)

Dr. Brenda Eruero-Efealukwu
and Engr. Emmanuel Efealukwu

on Kilby, Nelson Mandela
anitarian Award recipient & Guest

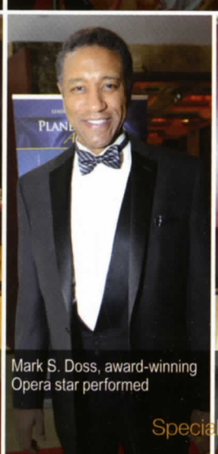
Prince Chinedu & Princess Oge George

Dr. Victor Obasuyi with Engr. Azuka Obasuyi and family

Chris Inneh
bbasoyenigun
nnin Kingdom

Anna and Bode
at the Gala Event

Raven and Lui Cinello



Mark S. Doss, award-winning
Opera star performed

Estifanos Mehari of the Eritrean
Consulate and Tewolde Mana

Marci Ien and daughter Blaiz

Some Recipients pose with Patricia & Moses Mawa of Planet Africa Group

Blake, Lifetime Achievement Award recipient with guests

Beyond Sound Empijah

Lonzo Nzekwe, Kingsley Jesuorobo & Farley Flex of FEVA TV present the Entertainment Award to Eddie Bullen

Frank Walwyn, Excellence Award recipient with Mitzie Hunter, Associate Minister of Finance, Ontario

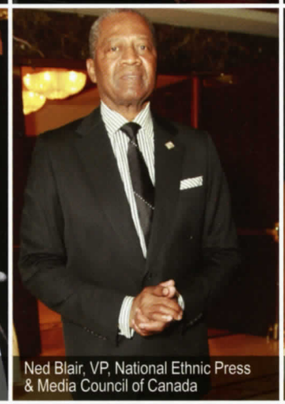
Rosemary Sadlier receives the Marcus Garvey Award from George Ramocan, Consul General of Jamaica

Sterling, Celina Morgan, Rising Star Award
t & Dr. Anthony Sterling, Platinum Sponsor

Mrs. Olusola Momoh, Vice Chairman, Channels TV, John Momoh, Leadership Award recipient & Eric Jolliffe, York Regional Police Chief

Jennifer Evans, Peel Police Chief & Liben Gibremikael, Development Award recipient

Patricia Bebia Mawa presents a bouquet to sponsors Tayo and Ayo Alabi of Jodal Healthcare


Ned Blair, VP, National Ethnic Press & Media Council of Canada

Some Planet Africa Awards team members

aidoo, Member of Provincial Parliament, Dwayne Morgan
sance Award recipient & Pauline Christian, President, BBPA

Ben Johnson, Olympian, Lydia and James Luo

Gwyn Chapman, President, Canadian Black Caucus, Mesfun Haile, Manager at Globacorp & Brenda Foreman

Chamberlain Usoh, Ibilola Olabode, Ololade Agaba & Joseph Ezenwa of Channels TV, Nigeria

Beverley Edwards-Haines, MC

Representatives from PricewaterhouseCoopers

her Yamoah & Charmaine Tial of PwC present the
emic Achievement Award to Yemisi Ogunjimi

Mr. & Mrs. Agoro at the Planet Africa Awards

Jodi-Ann Brown & Guests

African Canadian Beauty Queens storm the gala

Brad Butt & Kyle Seeback, Members of Parliament with Patricia & Moses Mawa of Planet Africa & Senator Don Meredith

uty Queens assist with raffle draw

Kofi Sankofa and kids from The Elms JMS & Boys Leadership Academy

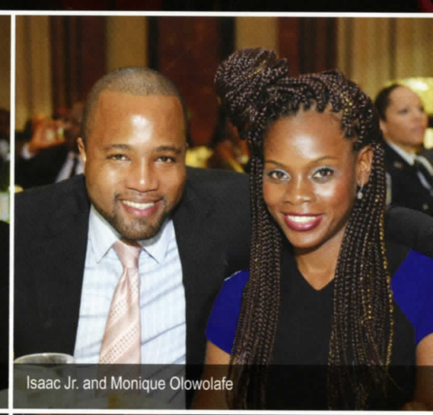
Chief & Mrs. Jolliffe & Deputy Chief & Mrs. Crawford

Nola Kianza, Founder, CCAFRICA & Nyameko Goso, Consul General of South Africa

Pastor Olusola Balog

sts at the 11th annual Planet Africa Awards

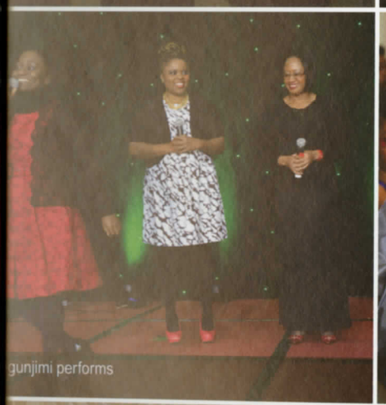
Guests at the Planet Africa Awards gala


Isaac Jr. and Monique Olowolafe

Michael Byass & wife, Dr. Modupe Tunde-Byass

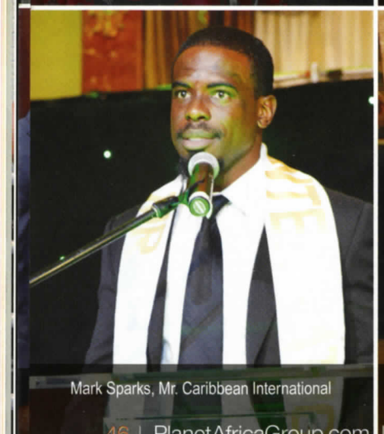
Dwayne Morgan and representative of the Toronto Police

Patricia Bebia Mawa presents a bouquet to Isaac Olowoloafe Sr. of Dream Maker Realty, Platinum Sponsc


gunjimi performs

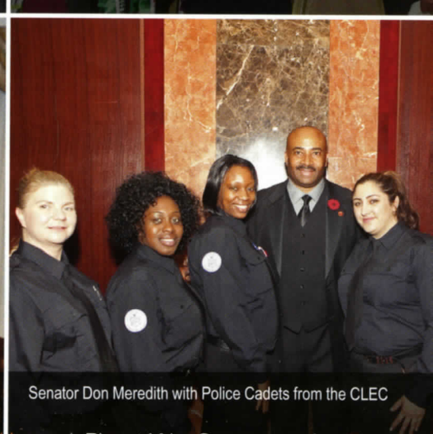
Pastors Bunmi and Tayo Ojajuni

Members of TAN Canada


Mark Sparks, Mr. Caribbean International

Sterling Dental staff, family members and friends at the VIP Reception of the annual Planet Africa Awards gala

n Kilby (third from left) and guests at the Planet Africa Awards gala


Senator Don Meredith with Police Cadets from the CLEC

# THE DREAM TEAM

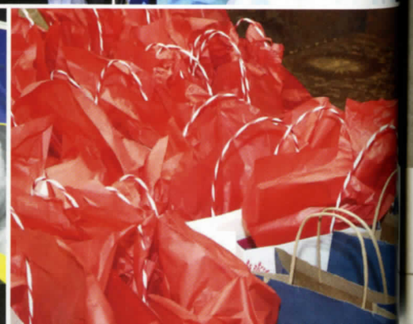
## Recognition and celebration of the operations team of Silvertrust Media, Planet Africa Group and the Transformation Institute for Leadership & Innovation

The Planet Africa Awards program is presented by Silvertrust Communications, and Planet Africa Group, which includes a magazine and a television show now broadcast on OMNI Television across Canada and on BEN TV in Europe. Planet Africa envisions higher levels of success in local communities as well as on the international scene. The Planet Africa Awards show is put together by a dedicated team of individuals that have been named "The Dream Team".

The team involves staff, associates and volunteers of Silvertrust Media, Planet Africa Group and the Transformation Institute for Leadership and Innovation. The team worked diligently to make sure that the 11th annual Planet Africa Awards gala was a success. "Indeed with unity of mind and purpose, nothing is impossible. We organized this event to say 'thank you' to all who have made it possible for us to celebrate excellence in such an awesome way," said Moses A. Mawa, CEO of Silvertrust Media at the Dream Team appreciation event.

The function, which was held on Saturday, December 13th, 2014, featured dinner catered by celebrity chef Selwyn Richards, entertainment by David the Saxophonist and presentation of certificates by Ajay Tandon of the Transformation Institute for Leadership & Innovation. The team also stages the Diversity Expo and the Transformation Awards gala.

Saxophonist David Obioma



ajay Tandon, Vanessa Acheampong, ainab Godwin & Debra Noreiga

Patricia Bebia Mawa, Moses A. Mawa, Ajay Tandon & Raven Cinello

& Eve Labi

Ajay Tandon & Alan Edison

Ajay Tandon and Kristin Au

Ajay Tandon and Tamara Cambridge

Ajay Tandon and Kenol Emile

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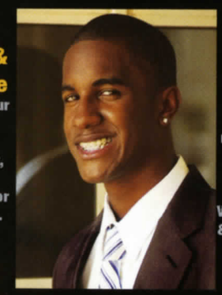

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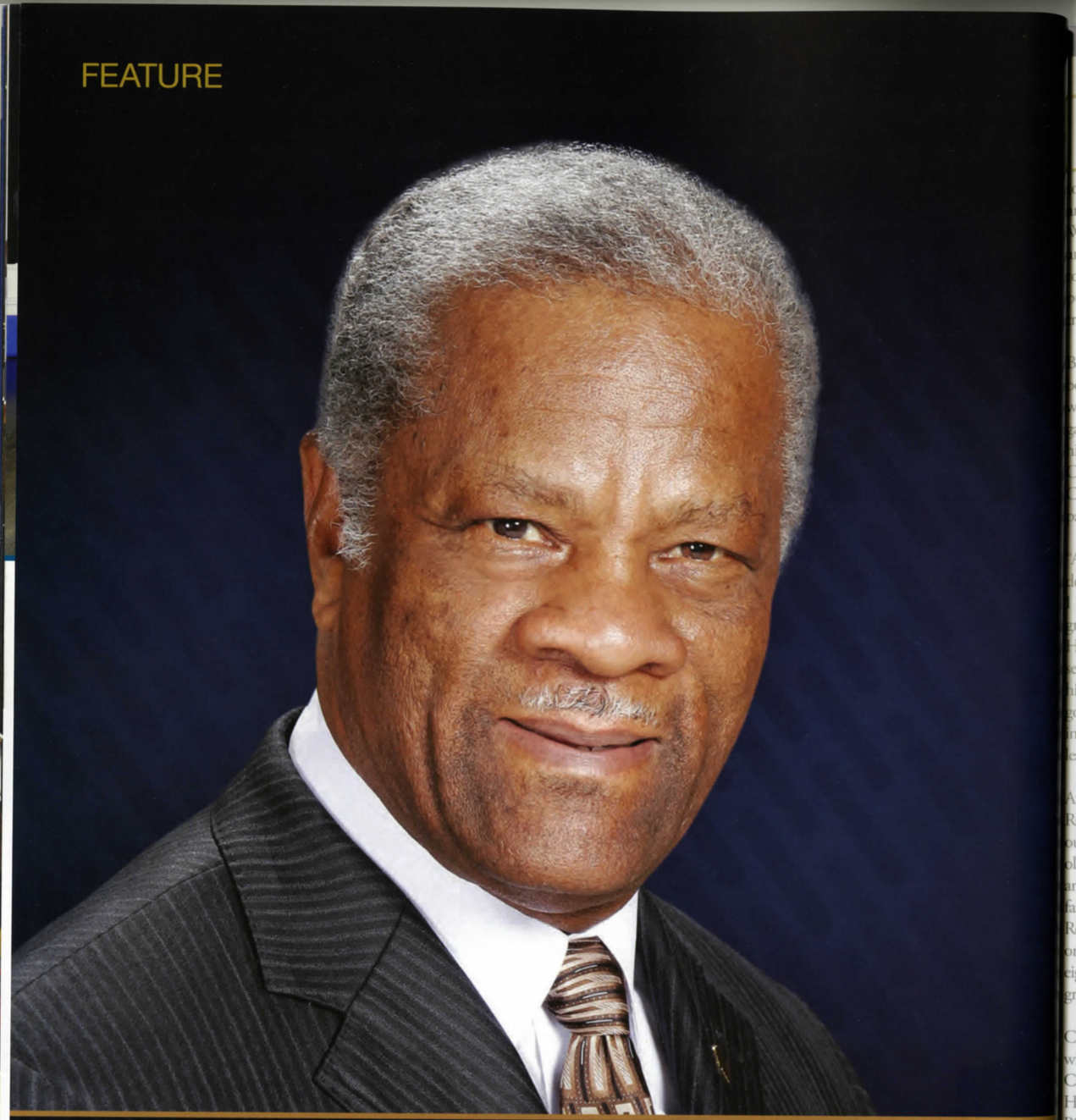


# BISHOP AUDLEY JAMES

## DETERMINED TO FULFILL GOD'S CALL

### IMPACTING TORONTO AND BEYOND WITH THE LOVE OF CHRIST

By Nicole Abbaticchio

Bishop (Dr.) Audley James is a man of purpose, vision and determination. For over 33 years, he has given himself to fulfilling God's call to help others come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Founder and Senior Pastor of Revivaltime Tabernacle Worldwide Ministries, Dr. James is an inspiration among his peers and a source of encouragement to youngsters. His ministry reaches far beyond the pulpit. He has advised government leaders and travelled to 27 countries.

Brought up in Trelawney, Jamaica, Dr. James was born third of eight children. His parents, who were business-oriented farmers and merchandisers, gave everything they had to ensure that he and his siblings were okay. Trelawney was primarily a Christian community. He was exposed to Judeo-Christian morals and values that have remained a part of him.

"At the early age of nine, I made a conscious decision to become a Christian and from that time, I felt and sensed the call to ministry," he says. He graduated from the West Indies School of Public Health and immigrated to Canada in 1969, in search of opportunities for a better life. He married his beautiful wife Rosenda and worked with the government of Canada for 12 years, while serving in the church as a singer, elder and teacher. Here, he learned the rigours of ministry.

At 43, after years of faithful service, he established Revivaltime, to reach the lost in the city. "In 1980, our three children were seven, four and one-years old. I was still employed with the government and pastoring. In 1982, we took a giant leap of faith into full-time ministry," he said, recounting Revivaltime's formative years. Dr. James embarked on an aggressive evangelism campaign. Within eighteen months of inception, the congregation grew to over five hundred.

Church membership now stands at over 1500, with two locations in Downsview and Durham. Canada Christian College conferred on him an Honorary Doctor of Divinity and consecrated him Bishop. He also holds an Honorary Doctorate of Humanities from Canon University. He has served as Chaplain of the Jamaica National Building Society, the Jamaican Diaspora in Canada and has overseen or supported ministries worldwide.

Dr. James has served as Chairman of the African Union Sixth Region Elders' Council in Canada and spoke on behalf of the worldwide African Diaspora at the 2012 Global African Diaspora Summit in South Africa. A recipient of the prestigious Planet Africa Lifetime Achievement Award, he has a deep commitment to serving God and transforming lives. His church building in Toronto, the first of its kind, has been designated a historic site by Ontario Heritage Trust.

Beside this legendary man, is his wife of 43 years, Rev. Rosenda James, who was ordained in 2003. The late Dr. Myles Munroe, her role model at the time, presented the certificate. The couple has 3 children, 7 grandchildren and countless spiritual children. Rev. James hosts women's conferences. In 2005, she formed The First Ladies Network, a team of Pastor's wives, focused on equipping women to lead with their husbands in a divine fashion.

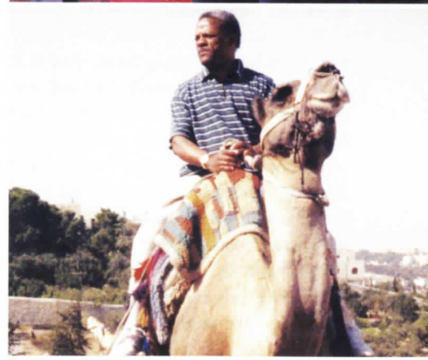
Rev. James worked with her husband to establish Adelfiha's Christian Academy (A.C.A.), to respond to a decline of Christian values in public schools. Their daughter Judith Meikle, is the Dean at A.C.A. and is married to Pastor Orim M. Meikle, Founder of Rhema Christian Ministries, a thriving and youthful church in Toronto. Their daughter Janna-Lyn is married to the son of Faith Miracle Temple Founder Bishop Al Baxter and their son Andrew is an Assistant Pastor at Revivaltime.

In 1993, Dr. James spearheaded building 45 three-bedroom units of affordable housing in Mississauga, with the assistance of Ontario's Ministry of Housing. Being a pastor in the 21st century presents challenges, especially when addressing the younger generation, who often choose worldly pleasures such as hanging out, television and social media, instead of cultivating relationships with God. He has led the "Put the Guns Away" campaign to address the problem of youth violence.

Dr. James is known to be one of the ministers who have conducted the largest number of weddings in Canada. For him, pastoring requires determination in order to remain focused, relevant and spiritually vigilant. "When challenges come as they always will, I take the position of the non-conformist. I stake my claims on the promises of God and declare, 'I will not bend, break or collapse under the pressure,'" he says.

Due to changes in society, Christian values are questioned and often come under attack. Revivaltime's vision is to take back the city for the Glory of God, then Canada and ultimately the world. "When we walk with the Lord in the light of His word, what a glory He sheds on our way. When we do His will, He abides with us and with all who will trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus," he says musically. The life of Dr. James is testament to God's goodness and the power of submission to God's process and perfect timing.

"At the early age of nine, I made a conscious decision to become a Christian, and from that time I felt and sensed the call to ministry."



FEATURE

# RBC ROYAL BANK

## CELEBRATING PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

### Recognizing Contributions Of African Canadians

Scholarship recipients with RBC executives

On February 12, 2015, RBC Royal Bank, Canada's largest bank celebrated Black History Month with an event that was aimed at highlighting the contributions of African Canadians to society. Focused on past, present and future generations, six winners emerged from the 2015 RBC Black History Month Essay Competition.

Emma Cohen of Waterloo won the essay competition and received a $5000 scholarship. The other five winners who each received a $500 scholarship were: Nour Hanafi of Milton, Estelle Annan of Vaughan, Karina Pelletier of Toronto, Sajine Sathiesalen of Markham and Grace Likungu of Ajax.

RBC's scholarship programs are a part of RBC's Kid's Pledge, a five year, $100 million commitment to kids and youth. The Black History Month event was attended by community leaders, politicians and executives from different organizations including: Senator Don Meredith, Member of Provincial Parliament Joe Dickson and Mayor John Tory. A panel discussion with Fitzroy Gordon and Isaac Olowolafe Jr., moderated by former consul general Kay McConney, focused on significant keys to success, most notably family and perseverance.

"Here in Canada and especially in Greater Toronto, where approximately 400,000 people identify themselves as Black, we have many important

His Worship John Tory, Mayor of the City of Toronto with guests at the event.

people and achievements to celebrate," said Kim Mason, RBC's Regio President for Greater Toronto Region. RBC supports a broad range community initiatives through donations, sponsorships and emplo volunteer activities. In 2014, we contributed more than $111 million causes worldwide, including donations and community investments more than $76 million and $35 million in sponsorships.



The RBC Black History Competition Winning Essay

# WORDS TRAVEL FAR

By Emma Cohen

Emma Cohen, winner of the RBC Black History Month Essay Competition

It is humans, of course, who shape human history. In an ever-evolving world, we are thrust into life, and with this entrance come all the burdens of the past. The burdens for some are heavier than others, and this is well known by African Canadians. However, it lies within our power to determine how we will shape the future, and the contributions of countless African Canadians have seized that power with gusto and heart. African Canadian history is as rich and brutal as the African sun, racism and injustice seeping from the pores of the nation, and yet hope and great accomplishments have prevailed. There are countless ways that African Canadians have made valid and important contributions to our society, but as a student of literature and participant in a world fascinated by media, particularly influential to me are the writers, wordsmiths and storytellers.

Josiah Henson and Lawrence Hill are separated by decades of riots, peace-makings and strings of individual histories, but they are intrinsically linked across the generations by their shared purpose of storytelling, and thirst for justice. Josiah Henson was born in 1789, and while he was born in Maryland, he is treasured as a Canadian hero. No stranger to the horrors of racism, Henson was not born a free man. As a young boy and man, Henson was ushered around various plantations and slave operations, where, railing against the terrifying waves of blatant racism and oppression, he developed skills of leadership. In 1830, after years of suffering at the hands of a slave master, Henson escaped to Upper Canada, a refuge for slaves seeking a new life. As if his prevailing over insurmountable injustices were not enough, the true glory of Josiah Henson began with his freedom.

Once he earned enough money through farm-work, Henson purchased plots of land and established the Dawn Settlement. It was here where he left a great Canadian legacy: the Dawn Settlement was a self-sufficient community of free African Canadians who were able to support themselves and live in a healthy community. This was no small feat. Henson also became a Methodist preacher, travelling to neighbouring communities to speak, and promoting the abolitionist movement. Josiah Henson lived a truly remarkable life, overcoming incredible oppressions and succeeding to create a safe and politically advanced life, not only for himself, but for many others.

An example to all Canadians in many respects, he was also the inspiration for the famed character Uncle Tom in Uncle Tom's Cabin, and he wrote three published works: The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada, as Narrated by Himself (1849), Truth Stranger Than Fiction: Father Henson's Story of His Own Life (1858), Uncle Tom's Story of His Life: An Autobiography of the Rev. Josiah Henson (1876). These each depict his journeys and tribulations throughout his life, and explore the contexts of life in such an era.

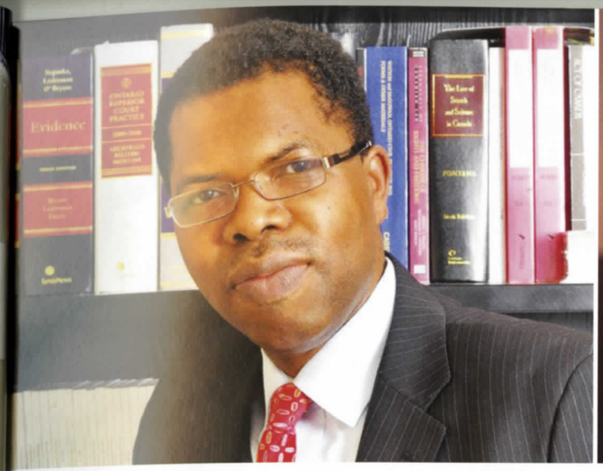
As an interesting parallel to Josiah Henson comes another and more contemporary African Canadian, who continues to leave marks on the face of Canadian culture. Lawrence Hill is a Canadian author, his father black and his mother white. The couple moved to Canada from Washington D.C. after they were married, and Hill grew up in the predominantly white suburb of Don Mills, Ontario during the sixties. Hill has written nine books; those of which I've read have not only greatly influenced me creatively, but touched me and urged me to delve into a pursuit of knowledge both specifically in African-Canadian history and more broadly in the context of politics. His works are a fine combination of heartbreak and honesty, depicting events and eras that one sometimes wishes were just fiction.

Dealing with immensely complex themes of slavery, war and social oppression, Hill splatters his pages with truths and declarations. As a writer, he is crucial to the public's understanding of our own history, and with that understanding comes the inspiration of action. Josiah Henson and Lawrence Hill are both djeli, as the Africans of Bayo in Hill's novel 'The Book of Negroes' would call them; storytellers. Their impact on the political, social and cultural landscape of Canada has been of grand importance. As they have painted their own stories and the stories of their ancestors with anguish and joy, they have lit a spark and illuminated a history of complexities, tragedies and accomplishments of African Canadians and at the same time, raised awareness of the excellence of African Canadians everywhere.

# JOHNSON BABALOLA

## ONE OF CANADA'S FINEST LEGAL MINDS

## TAKING BUSINESS TO ANOTHER LEVEL



By Linda Akinyemi

Johnson Babalola's grandmother and his mother raised him to believe that despite life's challenges, he could do anything. Instead of becoming an agriculturist, he fullfilled the challenge, when he became a sole practicing lawyer and a founding partner at the law firm of Babalola, Odeleye. Years later, with a business background and a solid desire to represent clients in matters relating to Canadian immigration and refugee law, he founded Johnson Babalola (JB) Law. The Toronto-based lawyer has appeared before the Federal Court of Canada and a variety of tribunals, representing clients. He writes on immigration and settlement matters, as well as travels internationally to present seminars to prospective immigrants.

Born in Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria, Babalola's father was a farmer while his mother was a nurse. Partly raised by his grandmother in Ijare, Ondo State, he remembers his childhood was "full of positive memories. "Life was simple in Ijare – a small town inhabited by people who cared about one another. I was raised to understand and appreciate positive relationships with people. There were no distractions such as TV, phones or internet at the time," says Babalola, who often helped his grandmother sell prepared food items after school hours, to raise money for the family's upkeep.

Ever since he first listened to his friends discuss the law profession, Babalola was drawn to the legal career field. He envisioned himself helping people and corporate clients to solve legal problems. Having studied law at the University of Ibadan, he soon left Nigeria for the United Kingdom. However, due to his lack of proper immigration status in the country, he accepted all kinds of non-legal jobs, including security and cleaning. Despite starting an immigration consulting firm at first in Canada and later a partnership, Babalola was not fulfilled, as he knew there were limitations. "I studied for my law qualifying exams, passed, was called to the Law Society of Upper Canada in 2004 and started practicing law full time," he recalls.

Today, JB Law boasts of 10 professionals including five lawyers and five assistants that represent clients from all over the world effectively and at reasonable costs. "We handle anything that has to do with immigration; such as refugee matters, permanent residence, investor program, student visas, appeals, deportations, humanitarian and compassionate applications," says Babalola who also handles matters relating to civil litigation, mining law, criminal matters and assists clients in African countries wishing to do business in Canada. The team's thorough knowledge of the law and attention to detail continue to be the bedrock of the firm's success.

When asked about his reputation and success as a lawyer, Babalola says, "Integrity, knowledge of the law, excellence in customer service and great staff are crucial. I am lucky to have these brilliant, focused and dedicated individuals to work with. And as a law firm, I am proud that we sincerely care about our clients." He believes that treating clients like he would want to be treated is key, as well as keeping communication simple but effective. Beyond the court room, Babalola is involved in other businesses.

"Integrity, knowledge of the law, excellence in customer service and great staff are crucial. I am lucky to have these brilliant, focused and dedicated individuals to work with. And as a law firm, I am proud that we sincerely care about our clients"

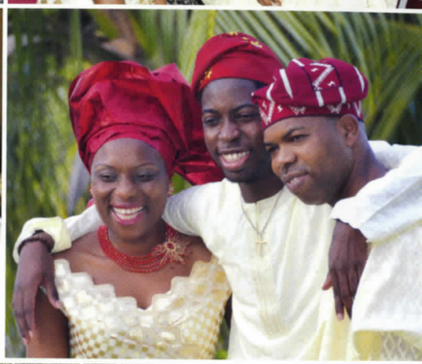
Tobi, Omolewa, Johnson, Folasewa and Olufunke: The Babalola Family.

Babalola is the President of G8Way Consulting Group, a company that assists students gain admission into Canadian institutions and organizes training for private and public workers. He is also a director at Work Hunters, a new online global recruitment company.

Happily married to Olufunke, the father of three says his overarching concept for business and life in general is about doing well by his family, friends and even strangers. "For me, money means little; character means much more. Life is really a journey and one will always be remembered for impact on others." He has been able to do well because his home is well taken care of. "I give kudos to my lovely and beautiful wife for holding the home font. She and kids are very understanding. I thank God and I love them deeply."

Babalola is very active in a number of groups within the community, including church and cultural associations. Having sat on boards of a number of non-profit organizations, he provides free legal advice and lectures to community organizations in Canada and overseas. His 50th birthday bash in Jamaica was attended by many friends and family on January 5th, 2013, testament to how much he is liked. His advice to students contemplating the legal profession is that they need to seek mentors and work hard. "With focus, hard work and a desire to do well, the sky is the limit."

ohnson Babalola's
th birthday bash in
maica, attended by
riends and family.



# *Love Begins, When Your Heart Says Yes!*

## *A Toast To Ariam And Henok Ghebrezghi*

By Patricia Bebia Mawa

The Coffee ceremony is highly valued in Eritrean culture. Coffee is offered when visiting friends, during celebrations, or as a daily part of life. Coffee will always bring back fond memories for Ariam Tekeste and Henok Ghebrezghi. It was at an Eritrean youth event in Kitchener, Ontario called "Boon Night" (Traditional coffee night) that they met. They would later discover that they had crossed paths years before.

The two became friends and later tied the knot in a colourful Christian and Eritrean ceremony in Toronto. "I was able to check all the boxes from my list of requirements" says Ariam with a smile. For Henok living without Ariam was not an option, as moments they spent together were simply unforgettable. "We are just extremely compatible and could not spend enough time together. It just made sense to me" says Henok on why marrying Ariam was inevitable.

Henok would later go down on one knee to an unsuspecting Ariam in the presence of family and friends. "I was definitely surprised and excited. It was such an overwhelming feeling that I can't say I remember much after he popped the question" recounts Ariam about the day she will never forget. "We decided to have a more traditional wedding with Eritrean cultural elements throughout the day. We had a very large wedding as is the custom back in Eritrea, says Ariam. "That said, it was key to have good coordination and organization between our families and guests during the planning process" she adds. Ariam and Henok's wedding was not just the coming together of two hearts and two lives, but the union of two families.

"Celebrating with a large number of family members from all over the world was special" says Henok about what he loved most about their wedding day. Ariam's advice to young ladies is simple. "If you are proactive about creating situations and being in the right place, it may make things easier to find your mate". To young men ready to settle down, Henok says: "Be confident, humble and decisive".

Many people these days are spending money and time preparing for the wedding and not for the marriage, but the couple had their priorities in place before their marriage began. "Our marriage began long before our wedding day. Spend your money and time establishing a good foundation for your relationship to thrive in the days and years to come and not just for one day" Ariam advices. Henok agrees and adds: "Try to save money for a home before spending money on your wedding."

Ariam and Henok hope to become parents and continue to invest in their love for each other. They also plan to continue to share the one thing that brought them together; "Boon" (coffee) with family and friends. When there is love and appreciation, celebration never ends. It will always be a toast to Mr. and Mrs. Ariam and Henok Ghebrezghi.

CONCORDPHOTO

# PATHWAY TO SUCCESS

## International Leadership Development Program

### A Project Of The Wholesale And Retail Sector Education & Training Authority Of South Africa (W&RSETA).

Joel Dikgole, CEO, W&RSETA

ILDP Delegates and stakeholders in Toronto

In an effort to develop skills needed for members of South Africa's diverse communities to succeed, the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&RSETA) was established. It is South Africa's premier organization in skills development in the Wholesale and Retail Sector.

W&RSETA's International Leadership Development program (ILDP) is an intensive action learning program designed to develop the future leaders of the wholesale and retail sector. During the ILDP program, participants who are mainly from historically disadvantaged groups are exposed to thriving markets to accelerate their business insights, as they learn directly from global business leaders.

"There is no university of experience and unfortunately we cannot build any. The only way young people can gain experience is through opportunities like the ILDP" said His Excellency Membathisi Mdladlana, South Africa's High Commissioner to Canada and former Minister of Labour.

In 2014, selected delegates from South Africa received training in five countries, with experiences in Toronto, Canada; New York and Penn State in The Unites States of America; Mumbai, India; Shanghai, China and as well as Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.

As the fourth largest contributor to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of South Africa, at 13.3 percent, the wholesale sector employs 19 percent of the workforce. Under the distinguished leadership of Joel Dikgole, W&RSETA has reached great heights in its goal of advancing excellence in learning, as well as in raising diverse talents in the highest level of the industry in South Africa.

The Transformation Institute for Leadership and Innovation and Silvertrust Communications worked with Henley Business School to facilitate the program in Canada and the United States of America. "The delegates will return to South Africa with new ideas which will encourage and enhance innovation and benefit our sector and country," says Joel Dikgole, CEO of W&RSETA.

Niagara Falls

Tesla Motors

ILDP Delegates in Dubai

In Toronto, 24 of the emerging South African retail and wholesale executives gained insights at Canadian Tire, Loblaws, Rotman's School of Business, Tesla Motors, Mosaic Wholesalers and other organizations. The delegates received a great welcome at Toronto City Hall, where they met with stakeholders from the wholesale, retail and government sectors.

"As Canada's leading business centre, Toronto is a great place for you to deem your knowledge and understanding about commerce and the wholesale and retail business," said Michael Thompson, City Councillor and Chair of Toronto's Economic Development and Culture Committee.

The ILDP delegates gain firsthand experience regarding the culture, organization and approach to business in the cities they visit. The delegates also get an opportunity to recreate after an intensive program. Visits are scheduled to tourist destinations in some of the cities they visit.

For many of the delegates, this was an opportunity of a lifetime. "This is a phenomenal program. I have seen myself develop to become a better leader and the experience from the program will enable me to create opportunities for others as well," said Denzil Colbert, an ILDP delegate, about his learning in China, India and Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

# THE 2015 TORONTO PAN AM PARAPAN GAMES

## A World-Class Celebration of Sport and Culture

By Nicole Abbaticchio

Excitement is ramping up in Toronto as the city prepares to host the 2015 Toronto Pan Am/Parapan Am Games. For the first time ever, more than 7,000 athletes from the Americas and the Caribbean will arrive in the great city of Toronto to put their years of intense training, endurance and sacrifice to the test. Spectacular displays of athletic achievement and the rich culture of the Americas will inspire and entertain during the games, attracting more than 250,000 guests to southern Ontario to celebrate sports and culture.

The Pan American Games are the world's third largest international multi-sport event, only surpassed in size and scope by the Olympic Summer Games and the Asian Games. The Games are held every four years for the athletes of the 41 PASO (Pan American Sports Organization), in the year preceding the Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games. PASO is responsible for selecting the host city for the Pan American Games. The first Pan Am Games were held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1951 and the inaugural Parapan American Games were held in Mexico City in 1999. In the 2011 Guadalajara Games, Canada was competing champion in 38 events.

Athletes will compete at more than 30 venues located in 17 municipalities throughout the Greater Toronto Area and southern Ontario. With an infrastructure budget of $674 million, the Organizing Committee is building 10 all-new world-class facilities and substantially upgrading 15 more. New venues include an athletics stadium, aquatics centre and field house, as well as soccer stadium. In addition, the Province of Ontario is building the CIBC Pan Am/Parapan Am Athletes' Village in downtown Toronto, which will be used as condominiums after the event.

The 2015 Pan AM Games features 36 sports in 52 disciplines, which includes eight sports that are exclusive to the Pan Am Games—baseball, bowling, karate, racquetball, roller sports, softball, squash and waterski and wakeboard. Making their debut this year are women's rugby sevens, canoe/kayak – slalom, women's baseball, and golf, while men's softball returns for the first time since 2003. The 15 parasports include the Parapan American Games debut of wheelchair rugby, women's sitting volleyball and the return of football 7-a-side.

The Pan Am Games kick off on July 10, 2015 with an Opening Ceremony featuring a live performance from Cirque du Soleil and torch lighting ceremony, and will end on July 26, 2015. The Parapan Am Games start on August 7 and end on August 15, 2015. Tickets start as low as $20.

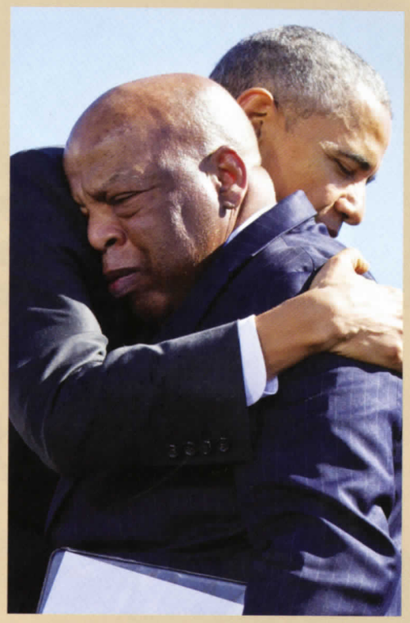
The 2015 Toronto Pan American Games are making history as the largest multi-sport event ever held in Canada. Extraordinary cultural and artistic displays of music, dance, theatre and other arts will take place at various sporting events and throughout the streets of Toronto. This is a once in a lifetime, world-class celebration of sport and culture.

FEATURE

# 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SELMA MARCH

## Symbolic March to Advocate For Voting Rights

By Dorcas Agyekum



On March 7th, the Alabama city that once held host to courageous civil rights demonstrators received thousands of people, marching to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. The historical confrontation held on same date in 1965, had an estimate of 600 marchers to advocate for equal voting rights.

Tragically, the peaceful demonstrators were met with violent law enforcements officers that attacked the group resulting in worldwide outrage. This led to the description of that day as "Bloody Sunday." Martin Luther King Jr. led a new march the same year from March 21th to 25th prompting passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

With the success of the movie "Selma" also bringing exposure to the event, the sacrifice of Selma is a reference to the dark past and a reflection of how far America has come. "It was not a clash of armies, but a clash of wills – a contest to determine the true meaning of America," said President Barack Obama at the 50th anniversary event in Montgomery, where he was joined by President George W. Bush.

Among the over 70,000 people attending the anniversary of Bloody Sunday was Amelia Boynton Robinson, who was beaten and left for dead at the Edmund Pettus Bridge 50 years ago. Now 103, she crossed the bridge again on the 50th anniversary in a wheelchair with President Obama holding her hand. "Get off my shoulders, there's work to be done," are Robinson's popular words to young people who say that they are standing on her shoulders.

"Alabama is a different place than it was 50 years ago. We need to always remember our history, but we can't live in the past," says Robert Bentley, the governor of Alabama. As many join to remember the daring community that fought for justice for African Americans, the country reflects on the incarceration of African American men and systemic racism that still exists today.

# PRESERVATION

## How To Maintain Momentum And Stay Successful

By Patricia Bebia Mawa

Achieving success is great, but staying successful is even better. Success is not a destination, but a constant journey. The road to success is laced with hard work and dedication and requires maintenance. Committing yourself to lifelong learning and yearning for new horizons is the difference between successful people and others. Success means more responsibility. Having interviewed thousands of successful people in my career, I am offering some tips on how to maintain your momentum and stay successful.

### 1 KEEP YOUR GOAL IN SIGHT

The reason many people become successful, but fail to stay successful is because they lose sight of their goal. They become excited about their success and forget the fundamental purpose that made them start in the first place. Years ago, when Starbucks stocks dropped by 42% and the store traffic reached an all time low, Howard Stultz, the CEO of the company shut down 7,100 stores to re-train the employees on how to make espresso. He also revealed that one of the reasons Starbucks was losing its market share was because the stores had a different smell and no longer smelled like coffee. When Starbucks went back to the reason people loved their product, they came back on top. If you lose sight of your goal, you will lose your audience. Do not deviate from your vision and purpose.

### 2 AVOID COMPLACENCY

I have heard people say "I have made it." If you have made it, does that mean that you cannot do better? Life is dynamic. When you stop growing, you stop living. When you achieve one dream, dream another dream. When you allow yourself to bask in the glory of your achievements, you diminish your ability to focus on the next task. It is often said that you are as good as your last job. Pat yourself on the back for today's success , but get back to work. If you just won the Olympics, that's great! You can break a world record. If you just did that, how about beating your own record? If you have done that, how can you keep the record? If you have done that; how about mentoring the next generation? Keep the same mindset that got you to your present triumph.

### 3 INNOVATION

It is natural to become comfortable with something that is working well. I have heard people say, "if it is not broken, don't fix it." If you do not try to fix it, how will you innovate and build a company like Apple? Was the PC enough? Travelling by sea was fine, but someone invented the airplane! One way to maintain your success and stay ahead of the game is to be open to improvement. If you keep doing the same thing, you are not only getting the same result, but you are not getting better. Previously, cameras used films. Today, digital cameras have made these types of cameras obsolete. Companies that refused to adapt to the new technology are now out of business. Adapt to change and explore new horizons. Innovators do not only change the world, but they make it a better place to live in.

### 4 PERSEVERE

In inventing the light bulb, Thomas Edison allegedly failed 999 times before he succeeded. "Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up," says Thomas Edison, who also has a record number of US patents. Most times when people give up, they have not exhausted all the options available to them. Nothing profound was ever done without perseverance. Stay motivated. Receive feedback with gratitude and use it to elevate your altitude. Always go the extra mile. This is what makes extraordinary people who they are. Obstacles are a part of life, but they are meant to be surmounted. People fail not because of the magnitude of their problems, but because of the size of their will.

### 5 BE LEGACY-MINDED

Success is achieving your goal, but greatness is creating generational impact. It does not matter how good you are, if your talent goes with you when you die, you have not multiplied yourself. When you mentor someone else, you are increasing your impact. Create a legacy plan for your wealth, idea, talent and business. When you retire, someone will re-fire your vision. Success can be measured by how many lives you impact and one way to do that is to give. Mahatma Gandhi said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Legacy means building capacity to sustain and extend your success. This is why even though Walt Disney is dead, his legacy continues to impact the world today. He left a legacy. He multiplied himself. Do not focus on short-lived success, but enduring and long term success. Set a goal, achieve it, go for gold and share it. Don't stop!



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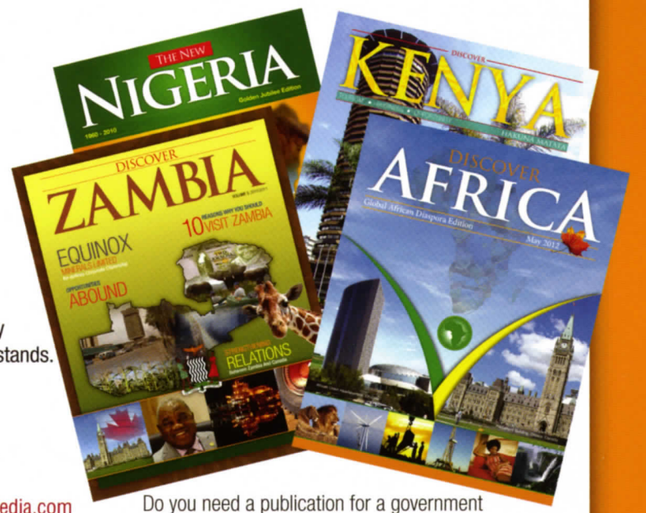
Silvertrust Media is responsible for the "Discover" magazine series as well as TV programs broadcast on CTS, Vision TV, The Micacle Channel and Grace TV. It is a multimedia, publishing & specialty broadcast services company.

**Mission**
The mission of Planet Africa is to reflect the best of people of African heritage in the whole world, regardless of where they live.

**Television**
The television program is broadcast on the OMNI channel in Canada, on BEN TV across Europe, and on NTA International.

**Magazine**
The magazine is the first, longest running, glossy and historic quarterly of its kind, to be on Canadian, American and other international news stands.

**Awards**
The awards program celebrates leadership and excellence at the national and international levels; the first and only program of its kind.

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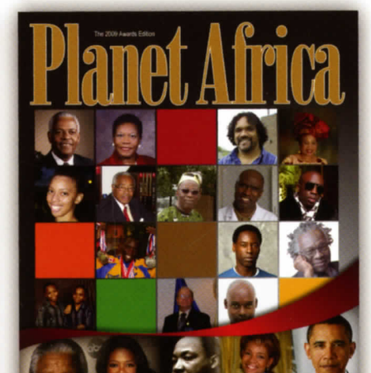


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